

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



3 1761 01993431 4

STIMULUS DIVINI AMORIS

THAT IS

THE GOAD OF DIVINE LOVE

Very Proper and Profitable for all Devout Persons
to Read

WRITTEN IN LATIN BY ^{WALTER HILTON}
~~THE SERAPHICAL~~

~~DOCTOR S. BONAVENTURE~~

~~OF THE SERAPHICAL ORDER OF S. FRANCIS~~

*(Long attributed
to St. Bonaventure)*

ENGLISHED BY

~~B. LEWIS~~ ^{EX LIBRIS} A.

ST. BASIL'S SCHOLASTICATE

AT DOWAY BY

~~No.~~
THE WIDOW OF MARK WYON

Permissu Superiorum, 1642

REVISED AND EDITED BY

W. A. PHILLIPSON

PRIEST OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER

R. & T. WASHBOURNE, LTD.

1, 2 & 4 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

AND 248 BUCHANAN STREET, GLASGOW

BENZIGER BROS.: NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, AND CHICAGO

1907

(All rights reserved)

EX LIBRIS

ST. BASIL'S SCHOLASTICATE

1111 5/21/21

JAN 29 1953



PREFACE

A FEW years ago an old copy of "The Goad of Divine Love" came into my possession. As it was imperfect (a number of leaves wanting) I made repeated endeavours to find one that was complete. But so rare, apparently, had the book become that only from the British Museum could I obtain the text of the missing pages. The edition now offered agrees almost entirely with that published at Douai in 1642. The quaint rendering is reproduced, but the spelling has been modernized, and a few unimportant and mostly verbal changes have been made. The translation is in the English of the seventeenth century. At that epoch our language had words and expressions in common use which nowadays would hardly be permissible. Of these some few I have eliminated altogether, and the rest I have toned down that there might remain nothing offensive to pious ears. The title of the book seems to have been a favourite one with ascetical writers, for several "Stimuli Amoris" were written or compiled between the declining years of the thirteenth and the middle of the sixteenth

centuries. This is, however, by far the most famous of them all, and is found in many MSS. of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although, as a compilation, it belongs to the fourteenth, it includes nearly the whole of a "Stimulus Amoris" written in the preceding century. It has frequently been published with the works of St. Bonaventure, and (mainly, perhaps, on that account) came to be very generally attributed to him. It appears, however, rather to have been founded on and inspired by the sayings, the spirit, and the teaching of the Seraphic Doctor than to have come directly from his pen. The author of the incorporated treatise was Brother James of Milan, who, in the prologue to a MS. of about A.D. 1300, is expressly said to have written it. But beyond the fact that he was a devoted member of the Franciscan Order, and flourished in the second half of the thirteenth century, little or nothing is known of him.

"The Goad of Divine Love" has ever been held in high esteem by Saints and devout persons. There is a note, in an antique hand, on the margin of one of the MSS., which says: "In my opinion this book may be called the book of life, and a compendium of the compendiums of the whole doctrine of beatitude." Louis of Granada compared it to the Meditations of St. Augustine, and St. Francis de Sales called it "most excellent." Some portions of the work—*e.g.*, the "Meditation upon the Great Sorrow the Blessed

Virgin Mary had on Good Friday"—are as beautiful as anything to be found in the whole range of mediæval ascetical writings. It is impossible not to be struck by the devotion to the Sacred Passion that breathes in almost every page, as well as by the evidence of the most tender love of the writer for the glorious Mother of God.

Lastly, the name of St. Bonaventure, with whom the treatise is associated, gives it a special interest for English-speaking Catholics when we remember that Pope Clement IV. offered the Archbishopric of York to the Seraphic Doctor. Through profound humility the great disciple of the lowly St. Francis could not be prevailed upon to accept the honour. Had he come to our shores, and shed the radiance of his seraphic love of God over our beloved country, the aftercourse of her history might have been widely different, and the England of to-day be still united to the See of Peter, an Island of Saints, and an example of faith to the world.

W. A. PHILLIPSON.

KINGSGATE,

December, 1906.

The Epistle Dedicatory

TO

THE VERY REVEREND FATHER, FR.G.P.,

OUR MOST LOVING, PRUDENT, AND PROVIDENT

PROVINCIAL

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER,

I cannot think of addressing the dedication of this present book to any other person than to yourself without manifest injury and impiety. For, first of all, the straight bond of obedience requires it, whereby I am bound unto you, as all others are that be under your charge, as unto a loving father for cherishing of us, as to a prudent Prelate for governing of us, and as to a most provident pastor for sustaining of us here, both with men and means—our two chiefest temporal props—and that in such sort as that you may most justly be a fit parallel to the best of your rank that have gone before you and a meet model to the most, I believe, that shall come after you. And although this be a strong bond enough to oblige their power unto you, that are able to do a great deal more than I can, as there

be many ; and also a motive potent enough to command the will of others, to love you better than mine can (if there be any), yet, nevertheless, besides this common and general obligation, I for my part am after a more special and particular manner obliged unto you by justice, gratitude, and the greatest affection that my heart can conceive, for an extraordinary benefit, that I acknowledge and confess to have received from God by your reverence's means—namely, my vocation into religion, which is a state of perfection, a school of virtue, and a place of all piety and devotion ; contrary to the corrupted world, which is a state, or rather a station, of imperfection, a school of vice, and a place of all impiety and indevotion. Here in religion are wanting all occasions to evil, and are found all occasions to good. The benefits of this single and singular benefit are so many and so great that I cannot express them. One of the chiefest is that the fathers have paragoned living in religion with dying for religion, which is the last and best blessing that God can bestow upon man in this life—in both which Christ is most nearly followed, as well in His life as in His death, and is best imitated, both in His virtues and in His sufferings ; and they do not differ so much but that in some sort they may be termed one. For what is martyrdom but a religious life, where many virtues are practised in one act ? and what is a religious life but a martyrdom ? But the difference between these two martyrdoms is for that the one is a corporal, short, and dying martyrdom ; the other is a spiritual, continual, and living martyrdom. And which of these two is the most difficult, let anybody judge.

Seeing, then, Reverend Father, that the benefit which I have received by your means is so great, it necessarily follows that the obligation which I have unto you for the same is also great, the which, by God's grace, I will always be as ready and willing, to my power, to discharge as I have ever been to acknowledge : as a pledge and earnest whereof I offer unto your reverence this present work, desiring you to take it in good part and with as hearty affection as it is humbly presented ; and that you would vouchsafe to give it shelter under the wings of your protection and defence ; which I ask, not for the love of myself, who am your most unworthy subject, but for our Blessed Lady, or, rather, for the love of God, which is the book's most worthy subject. And I hope your reverence will not deny me so small a boon that is begged for so great a motive, as long as you live to continue, as you are, the worthy son of ST. FRANCIS, and the undoubted brother of our countryman, ALEXANDER ALES, of which the first promised that he would never deny anything that was asked of him for the love of God, and the second for the love of our Blessed Lady. By reason of which most ardent affection which the one bore to the Son and the other to the Mother, our Order hath had the happiness to be honoured with such a seraphical founder and so irrefragable a doctor, and by whose sanctity and learning God's Church hath been so mightily propagated and increased.

This I beg of you for myself, and for your reverence I will not cease daily to beg of Almighty God and His Blessed Mother that you may here receive from heaven an accumulation of all grace and virtue, and

that you may hereafter receive in heaven an accumulation of all glory and happiness. This is the prayer of him that desires to continue, Right Reverend Father,

Your reverence's most humble
and obedient son,

B. LEWIS AUGUSTINE.

DOWAY,

June 20, 1642.

THE TRANSLATOR TO THE READER

TO THE AMOROUS, STUDIOUS, AND AMBITIOUS ENGLISH READER

MOST dear and best-beloved countrymen, I think there be very few or none among you to whom one of these three titles doth not agree—that is to say, that are not carried away either with human love, learning, or honour. And therefore I have propounded and set before your eyes in the frontispiece of this book the image of Christ crucified (which is the most principal matter of the same), to the end that you should make Him your best beloved to affect, your chiefest book to study, and your greatest honour to aspire unto : and that from the example of three most glorious and illustrious Saints of our Order of Franciscan Friars, who were the most famous in this kind of any that ever I read of.

First and foremost, if you be addicted to love, love Christ crucified. Say with St. Francis, our most holy Father and Founder : “ *The Crucified is my love.*” And well might he say so ; for he was carried with such a vehement and ardent fervour of affection to Christ, and that principally

in His Passion, as he seemed to be (as St. Bonaventure writes of him in his Life) like unto a coal in the middle of a great fire, that is red all over, and nothing but, as it were, mere fire. This love to Christ in His Passion St. Francis well showed by the inexplicable desire that he had to imitate and resemble Him as much as he could in the dolours of His said Passion, where Christ manifested His greatest love to mankind, Whose love was His death, and His death was His love. And because of this love that St. Francis bore thus to Christ, Christ would honour his body by imprinting in him His five wounds, that were the most *venerable signs* and most *honourable ensigns* of His Passion and *our* Redemption.

And by reason of this his excessive love (which was the passion most predominant in him) he is worthily styled Seraphical, forasmuch as the Seraphim excel in love to God above all other Orders. And for this love's sake it is credibly thought (as we understand, not by *human relation*, but by *Divine revelation*) that he now possesses Lucifer's place in heaven, who, as divines conjecture, was a Seraph.*

Nor was this love of St. Francis without just cause and very good grounds. For he found more beauty, more goodness, wisdom, pleasures and delights, and everything else that is wont to excite or entice to love, in the meditation of

* "Chron. Min.," tom. i., l. x., c. i.; St. Bon. in "Vitâ St. Fran.," s. 6.

Christ's Passion than he could have done in any other creature or thing whatsoever. But, above all, he found most love to be there. For indeed, among all the motives to love, there is none more forcible than to be loved. "*Nulla major est,*" saith St. Augustine, "*ad amorem invitatio quam prævenire amantem : et nimis durus est animus qui, si dilectionem nolebat impendere, nolit requere.*" There is no greater enticement to love than to prevent the lover ; and too hard is that heart that, if it would not *request* love, will not *requite* it. And therefore I think it is that the French have but one word for a *lover* and a *loadstone*—namely, *aymant*, by reason of the great analogy and resemblance that is between these two. For a *lover* is nothing but a *loadstone* to draw the beloved to him. *Est magnes magni magnus amoris amor.* And a *loadstone*, in respect of iron, seems to be nothing but, as it were, a *lover*. For what is that which makes the *loadstone* draw iron to it but *love* (as I may so say) to the iron, desiring, according to the true and chiefest property of love, to be united and joined to it. Now, if this be so, tell me where there is greater love than in God, who, as St. John says (First Epistle, iv. 8, 16), is love itself. And where has that *God of love*, or, rather, that *God-love*, showed and manifested greater love to man than in *Christ's Passion*, which may aptly be called *the furnace of love*, where God forged and made His masterpiece—namely, the greatest and best piece

of work that His wisdom could invent and find out, His love accept and approve, and His power execute and effect? He could indeed make a better creation, but not a better Redemption. I, then, may well say that *that* heart which is not drawn to love by this *Lover* or this *Loadstone* (call it which you will, I mean *Christ* in His *Passion*) is colder and harder than any iron in the world.

The next Saint that is placed as a model for you that are scholars and desirous of learning to imitate in your studies is the Seraphical Doctor, St. Bonaventure, author of this present book, of whom it is recorded in his life that on a time the Angelical Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, his co-disciple, out of the great familiarity and mutual affection that was betwixt them, came to visit him; and among other speeches that they had together, St. Thomas being in his cell with him, prayed him to show him his library, from whence he had his learning, and all his rare conceits that were so admirable and profound. Then St. Bonaventure showed him a crucifix—that is, the picture of Christ hanging on the Cross, saying unto him: “*Behold where my book is! Believe me, Father, this is all the books from whence I get all my sermons and writings; and mine understanding is more illuminated at the foot of the Cross than in reading all the books in the world*”—with which answer St. Thomas was much edified, and loved him a great deal more than before, sith it was no novelty to him, having experienced the same in

himself, that prayer is much more available for the getting of true wisdom and science than reading.

Nor ought this to seem strange unto us, sith if we well consider Christ throughout His whole Passion, we shall find Him to be like nothing more than a book, the *leaves* whereof were His sacred flesh, of the whitest, finest, and purest *paper* that ever was ; as being made by the best workman, the Holy Ghost, and of the best matter—namely, of the most pure blood of the Virgin Mary. The *press* where this Book was *printed* was the garden of Gethsemane, which, indeed, was a double *press* to Him. First, it was a *wine-press*, and in respect of this, that which was done to Him and what He suffered there was by way of *expression* or straining. For He was so mightily *pressed* with the heavy burthen of our sins, as that they did wring and squeeze out the most precious red wine of His Sacred Blood, through all the pores of His body. And in this *wine-press* Christ was not only a patient, but He was likewise an agent ; He was not only *pressed*, but He Himself also *pressed*. Of His active *pressing* the prophet Isaias speaks in the person of Christ (chap. lxiii. 3) saying : *I have trodden the press alone*. That which Christ trod here was the devil, sin, death, hell, and all other enemies to Him and our salvation, which He not only *pressed*, but also utterly *suppressed*.

Now, the wine that Christ pressed out here for

us to drink was the most delicious wine that ever was—wine, indeed, that most truly *makes glad the heart of man* (Ps. ciii. 15)—that is to say, that gives us courage and constancy, joy and gladness, in all afflictions, persecutions, and torments that can happen unto us. So that neither the temptations of the devil, the fear of never so cruel a death, the terror of hell, the sting of sin, nor any other thing else whatsoever, after we have once tasted of this wine, is able to daunt us, or make us afraid, as we see daily by experience in the blessed martyrs.

Secondly, this garden was to Christ a *printing-press*; and that which was done unto Him in this was by *impression* or *printing*; which *printing* was with two kinds of *letters* of a different hue: first, with the *black characters* of our sins; for so saith St. Peter (First Epistle, ii. 24): *He bore our sins in His body*.

The second kind of *letters* were *red letters* of blood, which were, as it were, the *rubrics* of this book, whose use is, in what book soever they be, to be as rules and directions for the better understanding and truer reading of that which is *printed in black letters*. Even so, when we behold Christ's body all over rubricated with blood, we may by it read the grievousness and heinousness of sin, how odious and abominable it is to God, and how dearly the devil's slaves shall smart for their own sins if God's own Son pay so dearly for another's.

Our small sins were as the small *letters* of this Book. Our mortal and capital sins were as the great and capital *letters* thereof. The *periods*, or *full-points*, were the pricks that the thorns made in His head. The *commas* were the prints of the lashes that the rods and whips made in His body at the pillar. His five wounds were the five *vowels* ; for as a *vowel* is a *letter* which of itself makes a full and perfect sound, and without it no *syllable* can be pronounced or spelt, so is it with the wounds of our Blessed Redeemer, which are of themselves all-sufficient, but without them our sins are not pardoned, our prayers are not heard, our works do not merit ; and St. Bonaventure, in page 246 of this book, gives it as a general rule, that “*if you would incline God unto you, for to grant what you desire, the only way is to bear in your heart the wounds of Christ.*”

The first time that this *Book* was bound was here in the garden, when He was apprehended, as all writers upon the Passion observe.

This *Book* was also *examined* and *censured*, and found to contain nothing in Him *contrary either to faith or good manners*. It was the general verdict of the common people (Mark vii. 37)—*Bene omnia fecit*. But to omit all *approbations* that are given of Him in both Testaments, both Old and New, by any person whatsoever, I will name only two of the most rigid censors of all, and both His enemies, whose testimony is the most weighty of all others, and greater than any exception. The

first is of Pilate, before whom He was accused of three things principally : First, that He contained in Him matter *contrary to faith*, as being a *seducer of the people*, and drawing them away from their ancient faith and religion which they had from Moses. Next, that, *contrary to good manners* and the laws of the commonwealth, *He forbade to pay tribute to Cæsar*. And the third seemed to be both *against faith and good manners* — namely, that He made Himself *Christ the King*. Of which accusations, Pilate, having examined Him, found Him to be innocent, and so He declared Him, saying : *Ego coram vobis interrogans, nullam causam inveni*, etc. (*I examining Him before you, have found no cause in this man of those things wherein you accuse Him*) (Luke xxiii. 14).

The next examiner in this inquisition, as the chief thereof (as he is of all others of this kind), was the devil, who is called (Apoc. xii. 10) *accusator fratrum*, and is so acute and cunning that, if there had been but the least fault in Christ, he would have found it out ; but it is said : *The Prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not any thing* (John xiv. 30). This testimony, indeed, the devil doth not give himself, and it is so much the better, for if he had given it, it would have been suspicious, forasmuch as he is an arrant liar ; but it was given by Christ, Who is not only true, but even Truth itself. And so this *Book*, being thus *approved*, was *reprinted* and *bound* again the second time at the pillar, where

He received a new *correction*, and after that Pilate *published* Him to the world, when he showed Him and said : *Ecce homo !*

And as *books* are beaten with the hammer of the *bookbinder*, so, in like manner, this *Book* wanted no *beating*, I'll warrant you. For besides the *beating*, both with fists and feet at His apprehending in the garden, at His carrying of His Cross, and at many other times (as we may well and probably imagine, and as spiritual writers have observed), He was *beaten* at three several times, of which the Gospel makes mention. The first time was when He answered concerning His disciples and doctrine, by one of the servants (John xviii. 22). The next time was by a great many, some with their fists and some with their flat hands, when He answered to *Caiphas*, adjuring Him to tell whether or no He was Christ the Son of God (Matt. xxvi. 63). The third time was when they crowned Him with thorns : *They smote His head with the reed*, say St. Matthew and St. Mark ; *They gave Him blows*, says St. John.

Bookbinders also use to *sprinkle* or *colour* their *books* vermilion, red, green, yellow, or the like. And so was this our *Book* besprinkled and coloured with the most filthy spittings and spawlings of the brutal Jews. That which no mannerly person will endure to see on the ground, but will tread it out with his foot, was His Divine face full of.

The name or *title* of this *Book* may be the same

title that was on the Cross—namely, “IESUS NAZARENUS REX IUDÆORUM.”

The *form* thereof is the smallest size that you can imagine. St. Paul tells you what it was (Phil. ii. 7), saying, *For He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant*. So low the Apostle goes. And a body would think, when he says *servant*, that were low enough ; but yet He was lesser and lower than that ; for He was not only in the small *volume* or *form* of a servant, to be under and to obey, but He took the *form*, as it were, of an evil servant, to be beaten ; and so evil as to be put to death. You cannot, I am sure, name any that has been in a less *form* than this.

This *Book* had seven *clasps* or seals, which held it always fast shut (like that in Isaias xxix. 11), and were never loosed until this time of the Passion, which, according to *Seraphin Firmanus*, were these : (1) The greatest impotence in Him that was Omnipotent. (2) The greatest pain in Him that was impassible. (3) The greatest foolishness (to the eyes of men) in Him that was the Divine Wisdom. (4) The greatest poverty in Him that was Lord of the whole world. (5) The greatest ignominy in Him that was the God of all Majesty. (6) The greatest forsaking by God of Him that was hypostatically united to God Himself. (7) The greatest severity in that Father Who bore the greatest love to His Son. Or else these seven seals (according to our own *Seraphin*,

St. Bonaventure) were : (1) God admirable ; (2) The Spirits intelligible ; (3) the world sensible ; (4) paradise desirable ; (5) hell horrible ; (6) virtue laudable ; and (7) vice damnable—all which you may see explicated in two of his books—namely, in *Fascicul.*, c. vi., and *Incend. Amor.*, c. iii., § 4—which, for brevity's sake, I here omit.

Notwithstanding that this *Book* be so small in exterior show, as I have said, yet it contains in it all manner of learning whatsoever, all lessons and documents to practise, and the example of all virtue to follow. But generally and more principally it contains but one only *lesson* that one need to learn, and it is a short one, too, which is like to the *pearl* that the merchant bought with the price of all that he had, or like Martha's *unum necessarium*. The *lesson* is this—namely, *to know Jesus crucified*—which *lesson* is of that necessity and sufficiency as that St. Paul, the great Doctor of the Gentiles, and the wisest among Christians (as having been at school in heaven to learn his wisdom, where never any other mortal man was but he), judged himself to know no other thing save this. And Socrates, that was by Apollo's Oracle the wisest among the heathen, for want of this *lesson* did most truly aver of himself that he knew but one thing, and that was *that he knew nothing*. And well might both of them say as they did ; for—

“ *Si Christum nescis, satis est, si cætera nescis.*
Si Christum nescis, nihil est, si cætera nescis.”

Do not marvel that I make *Christ crucified* to be both the *Book* and the *lesson*, since the same Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is both the *Gift* and the *Giver*, the *Physician* and the *Physic*. And on the Cross He both *offered* and *suffered*, He was both *Agent* and *Patient*, He was the *Sacrifice* and *Sacrificer*, and a great many other such-like marvels there are to be found in Him.

In the third place, I present before your eyes a perfect *Idea* and pattern of humility in the contempt of worldly honour (even the greatest that can be, for it was of a kingdom) in the person of *St. Louis*, the glorious Bishop of *Toulouse*, and most humble religious of the Order of *St. Francis*, who hath left us an admirable example in this kind. He was of the greatest and noblest extraction that the world can afford, as being nephew to *St. Louis IX.*, King of *France*, and son to *Charles II.*, King of *Naples and Sicily*. Nature ordained him to be the heir and successor of his father in his kingdom, but he abandoned and left the same, choosing rather to follow Him that said *His kingdom was not of this world* (John xviii. 36). For, lifting up his eyes to heaven and to that kingdom which is there, he found the little value of the best and greatest temporal things to be but small or nothing at all in comparison of Christ crucified, for Whose love he took the vilest, meanest, and most contemptible habit of all other religious—namely, of poor and destitute *St. Francis*—more esteeming this his holy

and Divine poverty than all the riches and honours of the whole world besides. And tell me, then, you that seek after honour, if St. Louis, that had sometimes been a Prince, and was now become a poor Friar, was not more glorious in a grey coarse habit, a walking-staff in his hand, and a bare crown, than he had been with a purple robe, a sceptre, and a diadem of gold and precious stones ? Is not his memory far more famous for having left a kingdom than of infinite other potentates that have had and enjoyed them, who are now buried in the dust of oblivion, while he is celebrated and honoured throughout all Christendom by all persons, invoking his favour to the end they may obtain from God by his means that which they cannot do by themselves and their own merits ?

Whosoever shall read the marvellous life of this renowned Saint shall find him to be a true platform for all courtiers, Bishops, and religious, to square and frame their lives by ; for he was all these three. If, then, there be any that will attain to true honour both here and hereafter, let them make Christ crucified their honour and glory, saying with St. Paul, *God forbid that I should glory, saving in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal. vi. 14), and with St. Louis here : *“ The Crucified is my honour.”*

That which I have thus far written I have done only to Catholics, that they would do that which many of them have done heretofore, and do

still daily—namely, make Christ crucified their best beloved, their book and honour. But as for you, beloved countrymen, that are not Catholics (if happily this book do chance to come into your hands), I will not go about to persuade you to forsake any love, study, or honour whatsoever to love poor Jesus crucified, and to make Him your study and honour; for it is a thing you never did yet, and I do not think that you will now begin for me. All that I desire of you is that you will not do the contrary—namely, that you would not hate Jesus, that you would not, instead of meditating on Christ's sufferings, meditate and study how to make Him suffer again, and that you would not use all the means you can to dishonour Him. And to the end I may move you hereunto, consider that which this Jesus crucified said to Saul as he was riding post to hell on the devil's errand: *Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare* (Acts ix. 5). His office was to be a pursuivant, and to this purpose he had a large and general commission, by virtue of which he persecuted, and that none other but Christ Himself, not in His real body—for that was in heaven—but in His mystical body and in His members—to wit, such as were Christians, Catholics, true believers, call them which you will. Even so in like manner do many of you at this time ride towards the same place as Saul did, with as great speed as he did, and I wish to God with as *good* speed as he did. Your errand also

is the same that his was ; for you persecute and do all you can against Christ crucified—not directly against Christ Himself and his own person, but against His images, both living and dead.

First, you persecute Catholics, who are Christ's living images, and like unto Him in three respects : first, by *creation*, as they are men endowed with a reasonable soul ; secondly, by *profession*, as Catholics acknowledging and following the same faith and Religion which He taught, and has ever since remained in His Church, against which the gates of hell neither have been able, nor ever shall be able, to prevail ; thirdly, by *persecution*, as persecuted for the same cause—that is to say, for no cause (Ps. cxviii. 161), except for justice, for their Religion, for their conscience, and, in a word, for being Christ's true disciples and followers.

Hence, O most noble and thrice-honoured Catholics, ought you to take courage, and be exceedingly joyful, to see yourselves so conformable, and like to Christ crucified, the greatest honour and dignity that can happen unto you, and from whence the greatest benefit that may be will accrue unto you. In the likeness that you have with Christ as men, you symbolize with all the world, but as persecuted Catholics you are singular, you have no sharers. And in this your condition is not only better than other men's, but it is also better than the condition of Angels,

who with admiration stand and behold you in your sufferings, and with a certain pious and Divine envy do emulate you ; for although they can *affect* Christ better than you do, yet they cannot show it in *effect* by suffering for Him as you do.

Yea, which is a great deal more, by suffering for Christ you are more ennobled and dignified than if you had the grace to raise the dead and to work all miracles, and have in a manner the pre-eminence over God Himself, even so much as the creditor has over the debtor. Because, as Cornelius à Lapide (in Phil. iii. 29) says out of St. Chrysostom and Theophilact : “ *By working of miracles we are debtors to God, but by suffering for Him, He is debtor to us.*” And, lastly, it is an evident sign of predestination to glory ; for so the Apostle says (Rom. viii. 29) : *Whom He hath foreknown [that is to say, to be His] He hath also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.* From whence we may conclude, by necessary consequence, that those *whom He hath predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son* (which conformity consists principally in suffering patiently for Him) He hath foreknown to be His.

To return from whence we have a little digressed, and to speak of Christ’s dead images—I mean His pictures and crucifixes—those you can as little endure as the former, but you do all that you can to demolish and utterly abolish

them, and will not vouchsafe them a place anywhere where you have to do. Is it possible that you can love and honour the Crucified when you hate and dishonour the crucifixes? Certainly, if you loved Christ, and were not too ungrateful, you would love both crosses and crucifixes too, because they put you in mind of so great a benefit as is your Redemption, and of the benefactor that was your Redeemer. And, verily, it seems to me, if I be not mistaken, that the Cross hath in some respect been more honoured by Christ than was His Mother. For if Christ had His Incarnation *in* her and *by* her, yet He purchased our Redemption on the Cross, and our Redemption is a greater benefit than Christ's Incarnation, by how much greater and better the end is than the means. And if Christ's Mother bore Him as well in her womb as in her arms, yet Christ's Cross in this goes beyond her, for that it did not only bear Christ in His Passion, but Christ bore it before His Passion, by reason of which the Cross received a double honour and dignity.

Besides this Christ doth so much esteem of His Cross, and all other instruments of His Passion, as that at the latter Day of Judgment He will have them present with Him in heaven, as St. Bonaventure firmly believes (as you will see in the pages of this book), and many others besides him; which, if it be true, as I believe it is, when Christ at that time shall make a search to see

where all those instruments are, I would fain know in whose hands He shall find them. Not in yours, I am certain, for you do so much abhor them as you cannot endure the pictures of them. If, therefore, others had no more care to keep them than you, they had been all lost, and so Christ might go without them.

Now, I say further and again, that if Christ doth so highly esteem of these instruments as that He will place them in heaven, how ungrateful and ungracious are you that will not give them place either in your churches, houses, or so much as in your open streets or fields, but you pull them down and deface them. Surely it shows they are not fixed in your heart, forasmuch as you cannot endure them in your eye. And is it possible for Christ Himself to be there, where His crosses and crucifixes are not, or, if they be, they are dishonoured and abused? I speak this to my great grief and your great shame, to see that you should be so devoid of all Religion and reason as to profess yourselves to be Christians—that is, of a Religion the Author and Founder whereof was Christ, Whom you know and acknowledge to have been crucified : and yet for all that you will not keep in your eyes, hearts, nor memories those things *by* and *with* which He was crucified.

I wish I had the Seraphical spirit and the intense charity that our Seraphical author had, not only to wish, but also really to undergo for

every one of you a several death, so as you may enjoy God's glory in heaven. But I exceedingly fear you will not be so happy as to come there. For it is probable that Christ's Cross and you will be incompatible in heaven, who are incompatible here on earth. I will therefore conclude, and say unto you by way of admonition and warning, in the words before mentioned, which Christ said to Saul: *Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare*; which saying is a proverb taken from headstrong and resty oxen, who, when they are pricked with the goad, kick against it, and so are pricked worse than before (Cornelius à Lapide, in Acts ix. 5). And so do you, in persecuting and doing all you can against Christ's members and images, as I said before. You strive and fight against Christ Himself, Who is more mighty than you are, to your own greater hurt, which you will one day feel, unless you cease and be converted.

Last of all, I cannot omit to say something concerning the title of this book, against which some, perchance, may take exception, and say: "These two things, *goad* and *Divine love*, do not agree and hang well together."

"Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur,"

for *Divine love* is an affection belonging to men, and a *goad* is an instrument with which husbandmen prick forward their beasts. And I pray, tell me, whosoever you be that read this, are you not a beast? If you say no, then you are not a sinner,

for every sinner is a beast, and worse than a beast. This is a truth so certain that it needs no proving. Every leaf almost of this book shows it. Scaliger, a most accurate Latinist, says : “ *A pecus est peccare, quia per peccata degeneramus in pecuniam quasi indolem.*” And Christ Himself, Who knew best how to name things, calls *Herod* a fox, *the woman of Canaan* a dog, and *Judas* a devil. And I wish with all my heart that I and all others were such beasts as David was, when he says : *Ut jumentum factus sum apud te* (Ps. lxxii. 22). For, first of all, he was of the best kind of all beasts, and therefore he does not call himself “ *bestiam* ” (as tigers, lions, wolves, and the like are), but “ *jumentum*,” which is so called “ *a juvando*,” *quasi juvamentum*,” because they help men in carrying and drawing. Secondly, he was “ *pium jumentum*,” a godly beast, so St. Bernard styles him (Ser. 3, “ *De Circumcisione* ”). Thirdly, he was not only a *godly* beast, but he was one of God’s beasts, for so He saith : “ *Apud te* ” ; he belonged to God’s husbandry—he was one of His domestics. And therefore, if we be such kind of beasts, let us not think much to be pricked forward to the service of Him to whom we belong with such a kind of instrument as a *goad* ; which word I have rather used than another, to give you occasion of humility, to the end you may think yourself to be (as indeed you are) a beast, hoping that you will not disdain the book for the name’s sake, no more than you would deride the Patriarch

Isaac (in whom all the world is blessed) because his name signifies *Laughter* ; nor affect the Devil, the prince of darkness (in whom all the world is cursed) for being called *Lucifer*, which signifieth as much as *bringing light*, or *shining brighter than the rest* (*Lucem ferens, vel quia lucebat præ cæteris*) ; but rather consider the *author* of this book, who is truly Seraphical, and the matter thereof, which is wholly celestial. And if this word *goad* do displease you, call it, if you will, *An Incitement to Divine Love*, or by some other name that you shall think fitting. I'll be content that you be the *godfather* of the book, in hope you will take some care of it, and love it, at least for your name's sake that you shall bestow upon it. And whether you be incited as a man, or pricked forward as a beast, and in both, as God's servant, to love God your *Master* and *Maker*. As long as you love Him, all's one to me, and I shall have what I principally aimed at in this translation : the which I have done the rather and more willingly for the author's sake and for yours together, for his honour and your profit, to the end that you, dear countrymen, may have him in some part of his works in *English*, whom you should wholly have had in his person *in England* ; for Pope Clement IV. offered him the Archbishopric of *York*, but he out of his humility refused it.

And if you shall reap any benefit by this my labour, give glory to God and this his Saint, and thanks to my Superior that set me about the

publishing of it. And as for myself, I desire your charitable pardon for that which is done amiss in it, because (to use the words of our author in his Preface) the doing thereof was out of *simplicity* and ignorance, and not out of *malice*. And if there be anything well done, I desire your favourable acceptance, together with your holy prayers, which I humbly beg of you.

THE EPISTLE IN THE LATIN COPY, TO
THE DEVOUT READER, IN PRAISE
OF THE AUTHOR

As there is nothing more witty than love to ex-cogitate all means by which the lover may obtain the fruition of the beloved, so among all the lovers of the Divine beauty (be it spoken by the leave of all other Saints) there is hardly anyone that hath so many, so various, so witty, so fiery Stratagems of love, by which the faithful soul may get the victory, and, as it were, triumph over God Himself, as hath this Seraphical Doctor, St. Bonaventure, from out of whose rich and well-stored Armoury of amorous inventions all chaste wooers of celestial beauties, that have ever been after him, have furnished themselves with darts wherewith they might wound (as I may say in his own words) the heart of the Divine Spouse.

And, therefore, most worthily hath that famous Chancellor of Paris, John Gerson (a man very much versed not only in Speculative, but also in Affective and Mystical Divinity) written this most honourable Encomium of him. I came (saith Christ—Luke xii. 49) to cast fire on the earth,

and what will I but that it be kindled ? *For in the right hand of God there is a fiery law (Deut. xxxiii. 2); Whose word is fired exceedingly Ps. cxviii. 140); Whose eyes are a flame of fire (Apoc. i. 14 and xix. 12); Whose harbinger, John, was styled a burning and shining lamp (John v. 35); which things, being well considered by our Eustachius St. Bonaventure, he would, therefore, be a burning Doctor, knowing full well that to shine only is a very small matter; it is often vain and frivolous, and sometimes ill and perilous, because knowledge puffs up and makes one a Devil. For what else doth Dalmon a Devil signify but learned? And because the learning that he has is without charity, therefore he remains a Devil. And for that cause hath our St. Bonaventure most deservedly purchased to himself a name according to the praise both of his life and doctrine—namely, to be called, after an excellent and eminent manner, the Seraphical Doctor. Let, then, other Doctors be named Cherubical, this our Doctor may most truly be termed Seraphical and Cherubical too, because he inflames the affection and informs the understanding; he doth reduce and unite to God by an ecstasical love, while many others do dissipate and distract the understanding, whenas, notwithstanding, there is but only one thing necessary. So far Gerson.*

Whose judgment everyone may know to be most true (being convinced by the witness of experience and their own gust), who by attentively reading the

writings of the holy Doctor shall make them familiar to themselves—yea, even those his writings in which a body would least think to find it so—that is to say, in his Scholastical Distinctions. But whosoever shall diligently peruse his Opuscula—that is, his smaller works that are most abundantly replenished with the Mystical honey of devotion, shall undoubtedly see the love of God to reside in the breast of this our Doctor, as in its true and proper seat.

Read, then, devout Reader, this ensuing book that breathes forth nothing but the fire of love. But read it with attention and a desire of profiting, and, I assure you, although you had a breast frozen with ice, you will, with the hot and sparkling affections contained therein, be all over on a fire and shine withal. Although you be harder than marble you will be wholly melted with those flames, and made as soft as wax, and retain in you the impression of Divine love so deeply and surely, as that (if you have but a very little care) it shall never be rased out of you by any fraud or malice that the Devil can use against you.

THE PREFACE OF ST. BONAVENTURE TO HIS "GOAD OF DIVINE LOVE"

UNTO Thee, O Lord, have I lifted my soul ; in Thee, O my God, do I trust : I will not be ashamed (Ps. xxiv. 1). Trusting in Thy most liberal mercy, allured by the wonderful pleasantness of Thy most sweet love and odour, drawn by the indissoluble bond of Thy most ardent charity—*unto Thee, I say, that dwellest in the heavens, have I lifted mine eyes* (Ps. cxx. 1), being enlightened by the splendour of the Sun of Justice, and provoked by the light of Thy clearness, most eagerly seeking after the beautiful comeliness of Thy most amiable countenance. And verily the inward desires of my heart, which are acceptable unto Thee, do solicit me hereunto. For what thing is there that can be more pleasing to me, an unworthy servant, than to know that I may serve so great a Lord ?

Being, therefore, incited to Thy love, I will presume to express in a few meditations (being hereunto induced by the entreaty of a friend, and also constrained by mine own inward zeal) how everyone ought diligently to seek Thee, how

they may find Thee, come unto Thee, and hold Thee fast within their embracements.

In which meditations, although divers things are touched and played upon, yet they, agreeing all in one, do make a most melodious harmony for pure ears. For although many and divers matters are in sundry chapters described, yet from them all there proceeds no other sound than the perfection of mind to the *Divine love*.

If you shall find anything else, pious Reader, I desire you lovingly to correct it, and not to speak evil of it, forasmuch as the cause thereof is not malice, but simplicity. For you shall here find variety to the end, that by the diversity both of the manner and matter, the weariness of the reader may be tempered, and his soul illustrated with divers radiant beams, and recreated with divers delicate meats. And being allured with the manifold variety, he may more earnestly be elevated to heavenly things.

And you, Brother John, of the Order of Friars-Minor, who art called Eucharistius, receive at my hands this small gift, which your humility hath often desired of me, who am altogether unworthy. And do not mock me for my ignorance, but rather, as a loving mother, smile upon me, a stammering infant, who by reason of my young and childish members am not able to perform any great matter. For I know that you love simplicity, and with a hungry appetite will savourly taste even coarse and country fare.

And forasmuch as your desire is insatiable, and you greedily receive that which is set before you, I pray you, therefore, to open your mouth, and incorporate into you these things (though rude) that are here written, for they be *preservative* and *conservative* of the soul's radical moisture, because I plucked them from the Tree of Life. Have a care, therefore, that the Tree of Knowledge draw you not away from this food, neither let unsavoury things appear savoury unto you, and such as are savoury unsavoury, but ever stand in fear to appear naked before God.

Here, then, shall the devout man find the manner of praying, living, and meditating; in the performance of which things the just man is raised from exterior things that are beneath, and with sweetness lifted up to those that are interior and above. He, therefore, that will grow into perfection, let him read and fulfil that which (by the grace of Him that was crucified for me) I shall here write.

A BRIEF SUM OF THE WHOLE BOOK

THIS book, which may not unfitly be called *The Goad of Love* towards most sweet and merciful Jesus our Saviour, is divided into three parts.

In the first is treated of the most glorious Passion of Christ—to wit, how we ought to meditate of His Passion, and how profitable the meditation thereof is, and after what manner and how willingly a man ought to be brought to compassionate His Lord Jesus crucified, and many other things which may be considered about the said Passion.

In the second part are handled such things as dispose and fit a man for contemplation—namely, how he may every day make his progress, and more and more please Almighty God; and how he ought to order himself towards God, himself, and his neighbour; and many other things disposing and inducing a man to contemplation.

In the third and last part is treated concerning the quietness of contemplation—to wit, what are the things that may induce a man to the quietness of contemplation, and how glorious a thing it is for him to be changed into God, and

how one may come to be changed into God. And also divers other things very profitable and necessary for such as would attain to the quietness of contemplation.

He that would have a taste of love in those things which follow ought with humility and fear to admire the majesty and dignity of God ; he ought to meditate with love, and often think upon the great humility and sufferings which He, out of His mere love, sustained on the Cross in dying for us ; and with most ardent desire make for himself those petitions that are here set down, and assuredly he shall be a good proficient in the love of Christ.

THE APPROBATIONS

LIBELLUM hunc, cui titulus est, *Stimulus Divini Amoris*—that is, *The Goad of Divine Love*—a Reverendo Patre F. Ludovico Augustino Ordinis Sancti Francisci presbytero, ex Divo Bonaventura, in linguam Anglicam translatum, perlegi, nihilque in eo ab Ecclesiæ fide alienum, bonis moribus, vel Sera-phici Doctoris menti contrarium deprehendi. Duaci, die 27 Junii, 1642.

F. RUDESINDUS BARLO, *S. Theol. Doctor et Professor in Collegio Vedastino Duaceno.*

Hoc S. Bonaventuræ opusculum, fideliter in linguam Anglicanam translatum, quod lectorem ad divinum amorem mire inflammat, magno cum legentium fructu excudetur. Actum Duaci, die 2 Julii, 1642.

GEORGIUS COLUENERIUS, *S. Theologiæ Doctor, ac Regius ordinariusque Professor, in Academia Duacena librorum Censor, Collegiatæ Ecclesiæ S. Petri præpositus, ac dictæ Academiæ Cancellarius.*

Bonis auspiciis prodeat in lucem Anglicano Idiomate *Stimulus Divini Amoris*, nobilis S. Bonaventuræ fœtus, opus pium, et dignum quod omnium linguis, et in intimis omnium visceribus legatur : mira suavitate,

et eodem quo primum conscriptum est spiritu traductum, operâ R'di Patris F. Ludovici de S. Augustino : ut ferreo hoc sæculo, in media barbarie, discant omnes amare quem persequuntur, et magno suo commodo intelligant, quam *durum est contra hunc Stimulum calcitrare*. Ita vovet.

G. H., S. T. Professor, Collegii Anglo-Duaceni
vice-præses.

Visis Approbationibus Doctorum Theologorum de Libello intitulato *Stimulus Divini Amoris*—Anglice, *The Goad of Divine Love*—in linguam Anglicam translato, a R. P. F. Ludovico de S. Augustino Provinciæ Fratrum Minorum Recollectorum Anglorum Prædicatore et Confessario, Licentiam facio, servatis servandis, ut pro solatio animarum erga Passionem Christi devotarum, quamprimum in lucem prodeat. Datum Neoporti, 23 Julii, 1642.

F. ANGELUS A S. FRANCISCO, S. Theologiæ
Lector et Commissarius Provinciæ Angliæ in partibus Belgicis.

A TABLE OF THE CHAPTERS

The First Book

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
HOW THAT A MAN OUGHT WILLINGLY TO MEDITATE UPON THE PASSION OF CHRIST, AND HOW PROFITABLE THE MEDITATION THEREOF IS -	I

CHAPTER II

SIX ADMIRABLE DEVICES BY WHICH A MAN MAY COME TO HAVE COMPASSION TOWARDS CHRIST CRUCIFIED - - - - -	II
---	----

CHAPTER III

A COMPASSIONATING MEDITATION UPON THE GREAT SORROW WHICH THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY HAD ON GOOD FRIDAY - - - - -	22
---	----

CHAPTER IV

THAT THE PASSION OF OUR LORD MAY BE MEDI- TATED SIX MANNER OF WAYS - - - - -	27
---	----

CHAPTER V

HOW THE PASSION OF OUR LORD MAY BE APPLIED TO THE FOUR AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND - - -	36
--	----

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE PASSION OF OUR LORD MAY BE APPLIED	PAGE
TO VIRTUES - - - - -	38

CHAPTER VII

OF THE SEVEN DEGREES OF CONTEMPLATING THE PASSION, ACCORDING TO THE SEVENFOLD GRACE OF THE HOLY GHOST - - - - -	41
---	----

CHAPTER VIII

THAT CHRIST PERFECTLY HAD IN HIS PASSION THE EIGHT BEATITUDES, THE TWELVE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, AND THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS - - - - -	75
---	----

CHAPTER IX

HOW IN THE PASSION DO SHINE THE OFFICES OF ALL THE ANGELICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL HIER- ARCHIES - - - - -	80
---	----

CHAPTER X

THAT IN THE PASSION DO SHINE THE GREATEST POWER, WISDOM, AND CLEMENCY - - - - -	90
--	----

CHAPTER XI

THAT IN THE PASSION OF OUR LORD THE HEART OF MAN IS EXCITED TO THE SEVEN WORKS OF MERCY	99
--	----

CHAPTER XII

A DEVOUT PRAYER CONCERNING THE PASSION - - -	106
--	-----

The Second Book

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
HOW A MAN MAY MAKE HIS DAILY PROGRESS, AND MORE AND MORE PLEASE GOD—ELEVEN DE- VICES - - - - -	119

CHAPTER II

THE WONDERFUL LOVE OF GOD FOR MAN - -	125
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER III

HOW WE OUGHT TO HAVE GOD ALWAYS IN OUR HEART, AND WITHOUT DESPAIR OR PRESUMPTION THINK OURSELVES THE WORST OF ALL OTHERS -	137
--	-----

CHAPTER IV

THE VIRTUE OF A HEART THAT IS FERVENT IN THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE DANGERS OF A TEPID HEART -	143
--	-----

CHAPTER V

THE PERFECT HATRED OF ONE'S SELF AND THE LOVE OF GOD IS OBTAINED BY THE CONSIDERATION OF ONE'S OWN VILENESS—THE PROFIT OF AFFLICTIONS AND DANGER OF CONSOLATIONS -	146
---	-----

CHAPTER VI

HOW THAT A MAN IN EVERY ACTION OUGHT TO ENJOY CONTEMPLATION - - - - -	157
--	-----

CHAPTER VII

HOW DELIGHTFUL AND ATTRACTIVE THE LOVE OF	PAGE
GOD IS! - - - - -	162

CHAPTER VIII

OF THINKING ALWAYS UPON THE PRESENCE OF GOD	166
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

OF THE ORDERING OF A MAN'S SELF TOWARDS HIS	
NEIGHBOUR - - - - -	169

CHAPTER X

THAT A SOUL OUGHT TO BE AFFECTED ONLY WITH	
THE LOVE OF CHRIST AND THE CONTEMPT OF	
EARTHLY THINGS - - - - -	177

CHAPTER XI

HOW A PRIEST OUGHT TO BEHAVE HIMSELF WHEN	
HE GOES TO SAY MASS - - - - -	182

CHAPTER XII

A PRAYER FOR THE STIRRING UP OF A SINNER'S	
HEART TO THE LOVE OF CHRIST - - - - -	190

The Third Book

CHAPTER I

THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT BRING A MAN TO	
CONTEMPLATION - - - - -	197

CHAPTER II

WHAT A GLORIOUS THING IT IS TO BE CHANGED UNTO	
GOD, AND HOW IT MAY BE DONE - - - - -	201

CHAPTER III

	PAGE
HOW A MAN IN A SHORT TIME MAY COME TO BE PERFECT—NAMELY, BY ALWAYS ASCENDING AND NEVER RESTING - - - - -	204

CHAPTER IV

HOW A SOUL IN CONTEMPLATION IS INEBRIATED OF HER CREATOR - - - - -	208
--	-----

CHAPTER V

THAT A MAN BEFORE ECSTASY IS DIVERSELY INEBRIATED - - - - -	211
---	-----

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE CONTEMPLATIVE OUGHT TO BE AFFECTED TOWARDS OTHERS - - - - -	215
---	-----

CHAPTER VII

THAT THE CONTEMPLATIVE OUGHT NOT TO REPUTE OTHERS UNEQUAL TO HIMSELF - - -	223
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII

AGAINST THE PROUD AND SUCH AS PRESUME OF THEMSELVES - - - - -	235
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF SUCH AS ARE TRULY OBEDIENT - - - - -	239
---	-----

CHAPTER X

THAT TEMPTATIONS ARE PROFITABLE FOR THE SERVANTS OF GOD - - - - -	245
---	-----

CHAPTER XI

	PAGE
THAT THE TEMPTATION CONCERNING OUR PRE- DESTINATION OUGHT TO BE REPRESSED -	- 249

CHAPTER XII

A COMPLAINT THAT THE FLESH MAKES TO GOD THE FATHER AGAINST CHRIST - - -	- 253
--	-------

CHAPTER XIII

A MEDITATION UPON THE "AVE MARIA" -	- 258
-------------------------------------	-------

CHAPTER XIV

A HUMBLE MEDITATION AND DEVOUT EXPOSITION UPON OUR LORD'S PRAYER - - -	- 270
---	-------

CHAPTER XV

TWO OTHER EXPOSITIONS UPON OUR LORD'S PRAYER	288
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI

A MEDITATION UPON THE "SALVE REGINA" -	- 291
--	-------

CHAPTER XVII

CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE BLESSED IN THE CELESTIAL JERUSALEM - - -	- 306
---	-------

THE GOAD OF DIVINE LOVE

The First Book

CHAPTER I

HOW THAT A MAN OUGHT WILLINGLY TO MEDITATE
UPON THE PASSION OF CHRIST, AND HOW
PROFITABLE THE MEDITATION THEREOF IS

1. God united Himself to us, that we might be united to^r Him.

2. The blindness of man's mind in this thing.

3. How that a man ought willingly to meditate upon the Passion of Christ, and how profitable the meditation thereof is.

4. The wonderful ecstasy of St. Bonaventure.

5. A sweet exhortation to enter into the wounds of Christ.

6. A notable caution.

1. RUN, O ye nations, up and down, and wonder at the love of *God* towards *you*, and at *your* blindness and wickedness towards *Him*. For if the Son of God would inseparably be united to the nature of *man*, by how much more ought your soul to be inseparably united to *Him* ?

And if the Son of God would with so great fervour of charity thus unite most base ashes to Himself, how much more earnestly ought every one to open his heart for the receiving of *Him* with the greatest devotion that may be? How mad is *that* soul that neglects to do this, and would rather adhere to base and corruptible things! *For the Son of God did not assume flesh that man might adhere unto flesh, but as He, being in flesh, afflicted His flesh, and condemned all things belonging to the flesh (His soul always cleaving unto God His Father), even so ought man to mortify his flesh, and raise himself up to heavenly things.*

2. Oh, the wonderful blindness of man, who, consisting of soul and body, and his soul being without all comparison better and nobler than his body, doth notwithstanding spend his whole time in providing for his body, and procuring such things as his body requires, but altogether neglects his soul, as though it were nothing or nothing worth; neither doth he take any care to feed and nourish it, nor to appease her most high Creator, sith *this* without comparison may be obtained more lightly, more sweetly, and with a great deal more facility and delight than the other! For God doth everywhere offer Himself to man, and requires no other price than the memory of His Son's death. But corporal things and such as belong to the body are vanishing and always flying away, neither can they be fully possessed of any, though sought after with all

solicitude, labour, and anxiety that may be ; unless, perhaps, we will say that *he doth fully possess all things who doth fully condemn all things.*

But (which is wonderful) this the soul doth, by being somewhat inclined and moved thereunto by the flesh, but no way constrained. For she voluntarily submits herself to the flesh, and endeavours to fulfil the desires thereof, but contemns and refuses to submit herself to her God, though moved thereunto by all exhortations, benefits, and internal inspirations ; neither will she do the will of God, though it be for her own proper good and profit. Certainly, if the soul were not worse than any creature in the world, she ought above all things to love God, to whom she is like, and not to care for other things.

3. If, therefore, O soul, thou lovest flesh, then love no flesh but the flesh of *Christ* ; for this flesh was offered upon the altar of the Cross for the salvation of *thee* and of all mankind, of whose *Passion* meditate in thy heart every day. For the continual meditation of this *Passion* of *Christ* will elevate the mind aloft ; it will show what is to be done, what to be followed, and what to be known and thought upon ; it will inflame thee to high and difficult things ; it will make thee love to be vilified, condemned, and afflicted, and it will rule thee in all thy thoughts, words, and works. O desirable *Passion* ! O admirable death ! For what is more admirable than that death should quicken, wounds heal, blood whiten


and make clean such things as are most inward ; that much pain should be the cause of much joy and sweetness ; that the opening of His side should join one heart to another ? But do not yet cease to admire : that the sun obscured should extraordinarily illuminate ; that fire extinguished should exceedingly inflame ; and an ignominious *Passion* should glorify and make honourable.

But it is yet more truly admirable that *Christ* thirsting on the Cross should inebriate us ; that He, being naked, should adorn and clothe us with the garments of all virtues ; that His hands nailed to the Cross should loosen ours ; His feet fastened and bored through should make ours to run ; and that the *expiring* of His life should be the *inspiring* of life into us ; and, last of all, that He, dying on the Cross, should call us to heaven and heavenly things.

O amiable and admirable *Passion*, that doth alter and change the mediter thereof, making him not only angelical, but Divine ! For he by meditation abiding in the torments of *Christ* doth not see *himself*, but always looks upon his Lord crucified ; he will carry the Cross with Him, and for His sake will most willingly endure everything both good and evil, and will always bear in his heart Him that holds both heaven and earth in His hand. He will be crowned with thorns with *Him*, and for a reward thereof he is crowned with glory ; he will with *Him* suffer cold on the Cross, being naked and without his garments,

and behold he is inflamed and set on fire with exceeding great fervour of love ; he will with *Him* drink vinegar, and He hath given him to drink wine of most unspeakable sweetness ; he, being on the Cross, will be mocked with *Him*, and therefore he is known of Angels, and adopted by the Blessed Virgin for her son ; he will be sorry with *Him*, and he is made glad ; he will be afflicted with *Him*, and he is comforted and exceedingly delighted ; he will hang with *Christ* upon the Cross, and *Christ* doth most lovingly embrace him ; he will with *Him* bow down his face that is pale with the fear of death, and *Christ*, lifting up his head, doth most pleasantly kiss him.

4. O amiable death ! O delectable death ! Oh, why was not I in the room of the Cross, that *Christ* might have been nailed to my hands and feet ? Certainly, if I had, I would have said to *Joseph of Arimathea* : “ Do not take away *Jesus* from me, but bury me with *Him* in His sepulchre ; for I will never any more be separated from Him.” But if I cannot do this in body, yet at least I will do it in mind ; for it is good to be with *Him*, and therefore I will make three tabernacles in Him— one in His hands, another in His feet, and the third in His side, where I will remain for ever, where I will take my rest, sleep, wake, drink, eat, read, pray, and do all my businesses that I have to do. There I will speak to His heart, and obtain of Him what I will.

 Thus doing, I will follow the steps of His most

sweet Mother, whose soul the sword of her Son's *Passion* pierced ; and being myself wounded, I will henceforward boldly speak unto her, and induce her to do whatsoever I will have her. And I will not only appear crucified with her Son, but, going to the manger, I will there lie like a little infant with Him, that by that means I may suck of her breasts with her Son. I will *there* mingle the Mother's milk with the Son's blood, and I will therewithal make a most delicious and delicate drink for me.

O most loving wounds of our Lord *Jesus Christ* ! For when on a certain time I entered into them with mine eyes open, mine eyes were in such sort filled with blood as that they could see nothing else ; wherefore, attempting to enter further in, I groped the way all along with my hand, until I came even unto the most inward bowels of His charity, with which, being compassed about on every side, I could not go back again. And therefore I do *now* altogether dwell *there*, and do eat such meat as *He* eats, and am made drunk with *His* drink. I do there abound with so great delight as that I am not able, neither do I know how, to express the same unto you. And He that aforetime was in the womb of a Virgin for sinners doth now vouchsafe to carry me His servant within His bowels. But I am exceedingly afraid that the time of bringing me forth will shortly come, and then shall I be deprived of those delights which now I enjoy.

But it is to no matter ; for if He be delivered of me, He must then, like a mother, nourish and feed me with His breasts, lift me up with His hands, kiss me with His lips, and cherish me in His lap, or else truly I know not what I shall do. And although He do bring me forth and be delivered of me, yet I know that His wounds are always open, and by *them* I will enter again into His womb ; and I will do this so often until such time as I am united *unto* Him as that I can never any more be separated *from* Him.

5. Oh, the blindness of the sons of Adam, that know not how to enter into *Christ* by these wounds ! They take a great deal more pains than they need or are well able to do in things that are vain and to no purpose ; whereas they may quietly and easily enter in at those doors that stand always open. What, do ye not know that *Christ* is the joy of the blessed ? Why, then, do ye delay to enter into that joy by the wounds of His body ? How mad are ye ! The blessedness of Angels stands open, and the partition wall thereof is broken down, and yet you neglect to enter in. It may be, perhaps, that you expect until your bodies be first dissolved, not believing that there is now at this present in *Christ* that which will quiet the soul. But believe me, O man, if you will enter into Him by those straight and narrow holes, not only your soul, but also your body, shall find admirable rest and sweetness ; and that which is fleshly and tending to

the flesh, by the entering into His wounds, will be made so spiritual as that you will esteem all other delights besides those which you find and feel there to be as nothing.

Yea, it may be that the soul sometimes will suggest and dictate that for obedience' sake, or some profit or other, you must depart thence ; but, the flesh being delighted with the sweetness that it finds *there*, will answer and say that she must abide and tarry there still.

And if this be true concerning the body, what sweetness, then, think you, doth the soul enjoy which by those holes is joined to the heart of *Christ* ? Verily I cannot express the same unto you, but try and you shall know.

Behold, there is an open shop full of all spices, and replenished with all medicinable and healing things. Enter, then, in at the windows of the wounds, and take that medicine which will heal, restore, preserve, and conserve you. Take of what kind or sort soever you will ; choose what delicate electuaries you can desire ; and if you would be anointed with most sweet ointments, be not slack to enter into those wounds. Behold, the gate of paradise stands open, and by the spear of the soldier the brandished sword is removed away. Behold the tree of life, bored through, as well in the boughs as in the stock, in which holes, unless you set your feet—that is, your affections—you cannot get the fruit thereof, Behold, there is opened the treasury of Divine

wisdom and eternal charity. Enter, then, in at the opening of the wounds, and you shall obtain great delights with knowledge.

Oh, how happy was that lance, and how happy were those nails, which deserved to make those wounds ! Oh that I had been in the place of that lance ! Certainly I would not have gone out of the side of *Christ*, but would have said : *This is my resting-place for ever and ever ; here will I dwell, because I have chosen the same* (Ps. cxxx. 14).

O fools and slow of heart, who, to possess some vain and frivolous thing, enter in at uncertain narrow holes, and oftentimes are not able to get out again ; but for the possessing of the Son of God, the chiefest good, the eternal purity and brightness, ye enter not in at the open gates of His wounds !

O soul made after the image of God, how can you any longer contain yourself ? Behold your most sweet Spouse, wounded for you, now become glorious, desires to embrace you, and to give you most sweet kisses, and you neglect to hasten unto Him. For out of His exceeding great love He opened His side, to the end that He might give unto you His heart ; He would also have His feet and hands pierced, that so when you come unto Him your hands may enter into *His*, and your feet into *His*, and all to the end that you may inseparably be joined unto Him.

I beseech you, according to the Apostle, *prove all things* (1 Thess. v. 21) ; endeavour to try *this*,

and if it seem good unto you, do not depart any more from *thence* ; and I doubt not but if you have made trial *thereof*, you will think all things besides *Him* to be bitterness ; you will willingly have the doors of His wounds (after you have once entered into them) shut and locked upon you, that you may go forth no more from *thence* ; and you will also wonder at your *own* and *others'* blindness concerning this matter, but you will rejoice for so great sweetness, which you shall feel ; and your heart likewise will be so much inflamed as that your soul will, as it were, strive all it can to go forth of the body, and materially to dwell in the wounds of *Christ* ; and your soul will be so inebriated with so great sweetness and fervour as that you will scarce be able to incline and bend it to anything else.

O wounds, wounding with your love hearts as obdurate as the very stones, inflaming with your heat minds as cold as ice, and mollifying with your blood breasts as hard as adamant ! O our assured life, hope, and sweetness !

6. If in meditating of this *Passion*, you attain unto that same sweetness of which I have spoken, or else unto greater, be careful that your meditation be not for any temporal sweetness, but that, recounting and acknowledging the great benefit of your Creator, you may be inflamed in His love. And this that follows ought to be your daily and continual prayer :

A MOST DEVOUT PRAYER.

O most holy Lord, omnipotent Father, eternal God, for Thy liberal bounties' sake, and for the bitter death and *Passion* of Thy *Son*, which He suffered for me, and for the most excellent sanctity of His *Mother*, and also for the merits of *St. Francis*, and all other Saints : grant unto me, a sinner, and altogether unworthy of Thy mercy, that I may love *Thee* only, and always thirst after Thy love ; that I may continually have in my heart the benefit of *Christ's Passion*, and may acknowledge mine own misery, and may desire to be contemned and trampled upon by everyone, and that nothing may make me sad but sin. Amen.

CHAPTER II

HOW THAT A MAN OUGHT TO HAVE COMPASSION
TOWARDS CHRIST CRUCIFIED

1. Six admirable devices or inventions by the which a man may come to have it.

2. The sinner desires and begs it of Christ, and laments the want of it.

3. A prayer to obtain it.

1. To compassionate our Lord *Jesus Christ* crucified, first of all strive as much as you can to unite yourself unto Him by fervent love. For by how much the more fervently you shall love Him,

by so much the more you will compassionate His *Passion* ; and by how much the more you shall compassionate Him, by so much the more will your affection be enkindled towards Him. So that love and compassion will mutually increase one another, until you come to perfection, if your own misery and wretchedness do not hinder the same.

But especially, and above all, study to cast away all presumption, distrust, and negligence. For a man ought to go about so noble a work humbly, confidently, and earnestly, and with as great purity of heart as possibly he can. And though a man seem to himself to be unworthy and wicked, yet, notwithstanding, let him not give over, because *Christ* was crucified for sinners.

(1) First, therefore, be so united to Him in love as that your heart may *now* seem to be united and joined to *Him*, and not to *yourself*—which, if you do, how can it be that you will not *then* feel His wounds ? Or what sufferings hath He had which will not pierce *your* heart ? Study, therefore, as much as possibly you can, that your heart may wholly enter into *Him*, and esteem yourself without *Him* as for a thing of nothing.

Let your whole care for the present be concerning your Lord crucified ; for whatsoever you are, you are *His*, and for that cause you ought not to give anything of yourself to any other than to *Him*. If, therefore, you shall be so turned and changed into *Him*, I cannot believe but you will

be *wounded* with *His wounds*, and confounded with *His* contumelies, mockings, and disgraces. And so I beseech our Lord of *His* mercy that He would make you feel that pleasantness and sweetness which you sue for ; for I cannot tell how to describe it with my pen.

(2) And if these things seem too high for you, not being able to reach unto them as you would, you may then exercise yourself after a more gross and plain manner as followeth. Think what a horrible torment you would endure if you were flayed alive, as was St. Bartholomew, or broiled upon a gridiron, as St. Laurence was, or were worried and devoured of wild beasts. Invent and devise such other pains and sufferings as you can, and when by thinking of them you have conceived within you a certain dread and horror of exceeding great suffering, then think that our Lord Jesus Christ endured on the Cross for you, a most vile sinner, far more grievous and intolerable pains than you should have endured in all the aforesaid sufferings. Consider, therefore, in your heart what distress and affliction He suffered, and how great love moved Him hereunto ; and by so meditating, let your heart be affected, as much as may be, with those dolours, and let your eyes shed most bitter tears, even as though you yourself did feel the same, and there is no doubt but they will be turned into exceeding great sweetness.

(3) And if this will not serve your turn, then take

a good sharp discipline, and go into a secret place, and there *whip* yourself soundly, not sparing your body, until it feel very much pain. And when you shall feel those pains, direct your cogitations to Christ crucified, and meditate how that your sweet beloved Spouse, your love, the desire of your soul, the solace of Angels, the reward of the blessed, your Lord Jesus Christ, would beyond all comparison suffer in His body far greater pains for *you*, that are no better than most vile and loathsome corruption. And do not doubt but this last remedy is very forcible, because a man by suffering *himself* learns to compassionate *others* that suffer.

(4) And unto all these means add prayer, continually beseeching our Lord Jesus Christ to wound your soul with His wounds, that for His wounds and Passion sake you may obtain of His goodness what you desire.

(5) But if all these means (by reason of the hardness of your heart) do not prevail with you, then most bitterly bewail yourself as most horrible and abominable, and say : “ How long shall the wickedness of my heart prevail against *Jesus* my Lord crucified, Whose wounds vanquished the power of the devil, overcame the iniquities of our first parents, brake in sunder the gates of hell, and opened the gates of Paradise ? And doth the wickedness of my heart so much abound as not to be overcome by so excellent a goodness ? What is there in all the world more wicked than

myself? and what is there greater than the wickedness of my heart? Woe is me! what shall I do, who, though I am very sick, yet can I not be cured by the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ? Let mine eyes, therefore, never cease weeping until the abundance of tears hath mollified the hardness of my heart. Alas! alas! *whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?* (Ps. cxxxviii. 7). What shall I do, seeing I know not where to find the life of my soul, and am not able to taste the great diffusion of the Divine clemency towards me? I will *sit upon the dunghill, and scrape off the filthiness of my soul with a potsherd* (Job ii. 8); I will from henceforward afflict and punish me, neither will I spare myself one whit, until in my affliction I find my Lord afflicted.

It is doubtless a wonderful thing how a man can have patience with himself when he sees the wickedness of his heart to be so great, and cannot weep. O heart most wicked—yea, diabolical! how long will you resist the immense goodness? Wherefore are you more delighted in the wounds of sin than in the wounds of Jesus Christ? Why are you more sorry for a little prick in your foot than for the most grievous death of your Lord and the exceeding great pain of your Head *Christ*, Who is the life of your soul? Where is there more weakness and madness to be found than this? O man, doth it not appear unto you that you love him most whom you compassionate and pity most in his pains? Do you not, then, love your

foot more than your Lord, because you are as dear and tender over it as though it were your heart, and do more compassionate the same in a very small affliction and pain than you do Him in His greatest torments ; and your heart is little or nothing at all moved towards Him.

O immense blindness ! O men worse than serpents, who, to save their head, expose their whole body to danger ! But certainly it seems that like rotten members we are cut off from our Head *Christ Jesus*, because we see Him wounded, and yet do not feel the smart of His wounds. Alas, alas, O my Lord, wherefore hast Thou made me if I may not be joined *unto* Thee ? Or if I be joined *unto* Thee, why am I not wounded *with* Thee ? Thou, O Lord, wast wounded for *me*—for *me*, I say, and not for *Thyself*, and yet it is *Thou* that bearest the wounds, and not I.

What a thing is this ! *I* ought to be the subject of the wounds, and not *Thou*, because it is *I* that have sinned, it is *I* that have done amiss ; but *Thou*, that art an innocent sheep—what hast *Thou* done ? (2 Kings xxiv. 17). Let those wounds, I pray Thee, be turned on me, and on my father's house. Restore us, O Lord—restore us our wounds, lest Thou that art guiltless, retaining another's wounds, do appear guilty ; or, at least, wound our heart with *Thine*. Behold, I will die, unless Thou wound my soul. I am horribly ashamed to see my heart not wounded, when I see *Thee* my Saviour thus fastened to the Cross for

me, a most vile wretch. Do Thou, therefore, Lord Jesus, either wound me with *Thee*, or give me leave to wound myself; for I will not live without being wounded, because I see Thee wounded.

(6) If all these things be not forcible enough for you, you are altogether unworthy of so noble a benefit, and from henceforward do not esteem yourself to be a man, but a very beast, and let your dwelling be among the wild beasts; for you are not worthy of the company of any other. Yet notwithstanding, it may be that if you humble yourself He that *respected the humility of His handmaid* (Luke i. 48) will also respect the humility of your soul, and will give you a new heart, that you may know your Lord God that suffered for you.

2. But when, Lord Jesus, when will this be? To defer, O Lord, is death unto me; and if Thou tarry long, perhaps I shall melt away with desire, and then, being soft and liquid, Thy wounds cannot be imprinted in me to continue. For my soul, O Lord, doth already begin to languish, and I am, as it were, brought to nothing with desire of being comforted with Thy wounds. Where is Thy wisdom, Lord Jesus? Dost Thou not know that it is better for Thee to have Thy creature wounded than to have him consume away to nothing, and so not to have him at all? Do not, therefore, I pray Thee, defer to wound me, lest through much delay Thou lose him whom

Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood. Run, then—oh, run, Lord Jesus, run, I say, and wound me quickly, because if Thou tarriest long Thou wilt perhaps find nothing of me.

But woe is *me*; how vile am I become! For it seems that God, Who loves His very enemies, hates *me*. For to redeem His enemies He would be wounded unto death, whereas *I* faint and pine away, and He seems not to regard me. I do not desire that He should be wounded again for me, but only that He would apply His wounds to me, who am already dead, that I may revive and live again.

Wouldst Thou, Lord Jesus, suffer iron, Thine insensible creature, to enter into Thy body, and there make wounds? and wilt Thou not permit me, Thy reasonable creature, to enter into Thy wounds already made? What is the meaning of this? Is my heart harder and viler than iron? Do you think it to be more cruel? Suppose it be, yet my cruelty will not hurt *Thee* if I enter in, seeing Thou art now impassible. For howsoever I enter in at Thy wounds, and run up and down within Thee, and eat Thy flesh for love, yet, nevertheless, Thou wilt still remain impassible, and my appetite will be satisfied, yet so as that it will be more increased.

But why should I call and cry any more? For Thou tarriest and comest not, and I, being weary with desiring of Thee, begin to grow mad. *Love* rules me, and not *reason*, and I run with force

and violence whithersoever Thou inclinest and forcest me. But they that see me deride me, because they know not that I am inebriated with *Thy* love. And they say : “ What ails this same mad fellow, that he makes such a yawling in the streets ? ” whereas they do not consider the greatness of my desire. They are ignorant that the vehement love of *Thee* hinders the use of reason ; and he that earnestly seeks *Thee* forsakes himself and all things else ; and he that searches for *Thee* with a pure heart doth so little care for outward things that even oftentimes he heeds not what he does.

Come, therefore, O Lord—come, good Jesus, and do not stay any longer, lest that for too much desire of *Thee* I become altogether senseless. And perchance Thou requirest that I be abstracted from all things, to the end I may more purely enter in at Thy glorious wounds, with which Thou mayest more fully wound Thy lover. Then will I cry and say : “ Woe is me, O my Lord Jesus ; how cruelly wounded do I see *Thee* ! What exceeding great pains do I see *Thee* suffer ! Who will give unto *me*, that I may die for *Thee*, O most sweet Lord Jesus ? I cannot endure to see *Thee* live in such pain ; I am exceeding sorry to look upon *Thee* ; and yet to have *Thee* freed and delivered would be death unto me. So that *I am straitened on every side, and what to choose I know not* (Phil. i. 22), but only to be crucified with *Thee*. When I consider Thy sufferings, I faint

in myself, and what for grief and anger together, I am in a manner lifeless, because Thou endurest so great evils for me.

What hast Thou done, O Lord ? Wherefore wouldst Thou be crucified for *me*, a most vile wretch ? And what am I, most vile worm and rottenness, for whom *Thou*, the Lord of all, wouldst be so afflicted, sith Thou art the wisdom of the Father ? Why hast Thou made such an exchange as to give life for death, verity for vanity, grace for sin, and glory for misery ? Who is able to think or express wherefore Thou that art Almighty hast done this ?

Thy love was too, too great, and in this appeared the abyss of Thy immense mercy. For I do not see in Thee any cause of death, but only the superabundance of charity. Were it not better, O good Jesus, that I had no being at all than that being made I should kill Thee ? Why, then, do I not tear my flesh to pieces for grief ? or why doth not every creature go about to kill me that have been the occasion of *Thy* death ? Is it not a wonderful thing for me to consider that *Thou*, a most noble and bountiful Lord, shouldst die for *me* a most vile wretch, and that I do not straightways faint for extreme sorrow ? And why do I not (if it were not contrary to Thy will) kill myself with a sword for grief that I have been the cause of Thy death ?

With great patience, therefore, ought I to endure myself as I would mine enemy, whom,

seeing before mine eyes, I would desire with all my heart to kill if I durst.

Is not this a most wicked thing, that after so admirable and profitable a benefit of Thy Passion, I cease not to sin in Thy presence, as though Thy Passion were a thing of nothing? Thou hast given Thyself for *me*, and I will have none of Thee; Thou hast put away my darkness, and I willingly run into it; Thou hast forsaken the world, and I embrace it. Dost Thou not see, O most patient Lord Jesus, that I always strive to do contrary to Thy will, and do openly withstand Thee to Thy face. If Thou sayest, "I will not have thee do this thing," I say, "I will do it." If Thou sayest, "I will have thee do this," I answer, "I will not do it."

I know that Thou, O my Lord, art the chiefest good, but I am nothing; and I look not upon Thee as if Thou wert nothing, but I turn the face of my heart and body unto those things that are vain, and sometimes to those things which it is not fitting to name; and my heart is so linked unto *them* with the chain of love as that it cannot lift itself up unto *Thee*, Whose it is; and this certainly is an abominable abuse.

But wouldst Thou, O good Lord Jesus, die in vain for me, and lose *him* for nothing, whom Thou hast bought so dear? Oh, pierce and kill me altogether with Thyself, that I be never any more separated from Thee, but that I may live with Thee for ever! Amen.

A MOST DEVOUT PRAYER.

O Lord Jesus Christ, wound my heart with Thy wounds, and with Thy blood inebriate my soul, that which way soever I turn me, I may ever see *Thee* crucified, and whatsoever I behold it may appear unto me red with *Thy* blood : that so, being wholly intent to *Thee*, I may find nothing but *Thee*, and behold nothing but Thy wounds. Let it be my chiefest consolation, O my Lord, to be wounded with *Thee*. Let it be my dearest love and affection to meditate of *Thee*. Let not my heart, O good Jesus, be at quiet until it find *Thee* its centre ; let it there rest, let it there satisfy and satiate its desire. Amen.

CHAPTER III

A COMPASSIONATING MEDITATION UPON THE GREAT
SORROW WHICH THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
HAD ON GOOD FRIDAY

1. The ecstasy of our Blessed Lady.
2. The sinner begs compassion of her.

1. *There stood beside the Cross of Jesus His Mother* (John xix. 25). O my most Blessed Lady, where didst thou stand ? Only beside the Cross ? Nay, certainly thou wast crucified on the Cross with thy Son. But this was the difference : *He* was crucified in His body, *thou* in thy heart ; and His wounds that were dispersed and spread

over all His body were united and knit together in *thy* heart. *Thy* heart was *there* pierced with the lance ; it was *there* crowned with thorns ; it was *there* mocked, reproached, and filled full of contumelies ; and it *there* tasted the vinegar and gall. O Blessed Lady, why didst thou go to be sacrificed for us ? Was not the Passion of the Son sufficient enough for us, unless the Mother also was crucified ? O heart of love, wherefore art thou converted into such a heap of sorrow ?

I see thy heart, O Lady, yet not so much a heart as myrrh, wormwood, and gall. I seek the Mother of God, and behold I find spittings, scourgings, and wounds, because Thou art wholly converted unto them ! O thou that art full of bitterness and sorrow, what hast thou done ? Why hast thou made that which is the vessel of grace and sanctity to become the vessel of pain and misery ? O dear Lady, wherefore dost thou not remain retired and solitary in thy chamber ? Wherefore didst thou go to Mount Calvary ? It is not thy custom, O Blessed Lady, to gad abroad unto such sights. Why did not womanly shame and modesty stay thee at home ? Why did not the horribleness of the fact detain thee from thence ? Why did not maidenly bashfulness restrain thee ? Why did not the loathsomeness of the place, the multitude of the common people, and the detestation of so heinous a deed, withhold thee ? Why did not the vehemency of their outcries, the madness of the foolish, and the

great company of such as were possessed even with the devil himself, keep thee back? But thou consideredst not these things, O Blessed Lady, because thy heart was altogether altered and changed through grief, which was not in thyself, but in the affliction of thy Son, in the wounds of thy only-begotten, and in the death of thy beloved. Thy heart considered not the common people, but thy Son's wounds; not the throng of the multitude, but His nailing to the Cross; not the clamours of the company, but His scourging; not the horror of the place, but His dolour. Return, O sacred Virgin, home to thy house, lest through the smiting of the Shepherd we also lose *thee*, and so we be deprived of the rule and government of both together. It is not the custom, O most excellent Lady, to punish women with such kind of death; neither is the sentence denounced against *thee*. But I think thou canst not hear these things, because thou art filled with bitterness; thy whole heart, most dear Lady, is turned into the Passion of thy Son.

O wonderful thing! thou art wholly in the wounds of Christ, and Christ is wholly crucified in the very inwards of thy heart. But what a strange thing is this, that the *continent* is in the thing *contained*! O man, wound your heart if you would understand this mystery; open your heart with the nails and lance, and life will enter in; for the sun of justice will not enter into a heart that is shut.

2. But, O wounded Lady, wound our hearts, and in our hearts renew *thy* passion, and the Passion of thy Son. Join thy wounded heart unto *our* heart, that we, together with *thee*, may be wounded with *thy* wounds. Why can not I have, O Blessed Lady, *thy* heart within *me*, that whithersoever I go I may always behold thee crucified with thy Son? O dear Lady, if thou wilt not give me thy Son crucified, nor thine own wounded heart, yet at least give me, I beseech thee, the wounds of thy Son, His contumelies, mockings, and reproaches, and all such like pains and injuries of His, which thou didst feel in thyself. For what mother is there that, if she could, would not willingly take from herself and her Son all pains and sufferings, and lay them upon her servant? Or if thou beest so inebriated with them as that thou wilt not have them separated from thine own heart nor from thy Son, yet at least, O good Lady, so join *me*, a most unworthy wretch, unto those ignominies and wounds as that it may be a solace to thee and thy Son to have a partner in those pains. Oh, how happy should I be if I could but be made participant of those wounds with *thee*! For what greater thing is there at this day, O Blessed Lady, than to have a heart joined to *thy* heart, and to the crucified body of thy Son? Is not *thy* heart full of His grace? And if it be opened, doth not the grace run out into the heart that is joined unto it? And if thy Son be the glory of the blessed, how is

it possible that if His body be pierced and opened the sweetness of that glory should not flow into the heart that is joined with it ? Certainly I do not understand how it can otherwise be ; but I fear lest we be far off, and we think ourselves near.

O sovereign Lady, why dost thou not grant me what I desire ? If I have offended thee, then wound my heart for a punishment ; if I have faithfully served thee, then do I demand to be wounded for a reward and recompense.

Where is, then, O benign Lady—where is thy mercy ? Where is thy immense clemency ? Wherefore art thou become cruel to *me*, that always hast been bountiful ? Wherefore art thou bitter to *me*, that hast ever been sweet and pitiful ? Wherefore art thou niggardly unto me, that hast always been kind and liberal ? I demand not of thee, most glorious Queen of heaven, the sun or stars : I ask only wounds. How comes it to pass that thou art so covetous of those wounds, as in no wise thou wilt part with them ? Either take from me, most dear Lady, my life, or wound my heart. For it is a great shame and disgrace for *me* to see my Lord *Jesus* wounded, and *thee*, O Blessed Lady, wounded with *Him*, and myself to be scot-free.

Certainly I know what I will do. I will cast myself prostrate at thy feet, and *there* with cries and tears will I incessantly demand, implore, and desire thy grace, and earnestly importune thee, that thou wouldst be pleased to grant me those

wounds. But if thou shalt strike me away, yet will I tarry still, and patiently endure thy correction so long until I be all wounded ; for it is nothing but wounds that I desire of thee. But if thou wilt not strike me, but cherish me, and make much of me, I will abide with constancy, and receive thy cherishings, which will wound my heart with love. But if thou wilt neither do nor speak anything unto me, then will my heart be wounded with grief and sorrow, and I shall not depart without being wounded.

CHAPTER IV

THAT THE PASSION OF OUR LORD MAY BE MEDITATED, FOR—

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Imitation. | 2. Compassion. | 3. Admiration. |
| 4. Exultation. | 5. Resolution. | 6. Rest and repose. |

IN meditating of the *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus*, a man may consider the same, first, for imitation ; secondly, for compassion ; thirdly, for admiration ; fourthly, for exultation or rejoicing ; fifthly, for resolution, or melting of his heart ; sixthly, for his quiet *rest* and repose.

1. First of all, therefore, let him consider the same to imitate it, for herein consists the chiefest and most perfect imitation of a Christian. This is his chiefest and most perfect life—namely, the imitation of *Christ*. This is the most chief and

perfect religion and religious perfection. This is the rule and pattern of all perfection and virtue—that is to say, the imitation of *Christ* in His death and *Passion*.

Let, then, the *Passion* of our Saviour be our rule of living, and let us hereby be so much the more comforted by how much more we are conformable unto *Christ*; and let us be so much the more discomforted by how much the further off we are from this rule and pattern.

Let it therefore always, as much as in us lies, be our desire to be trodden upon, despised, vilified, mocked, persecuted, scourged, and afflicted, and in our serving of God to be reprovèd and reproached of everyone. Let us be naked with *Him* that was naked, and let us desire nothing in all the world. Nay, let it be a most grievous pain and extreme torment unto us to have anything at all; but to have nothing let it be your full and perfect joy. Let us abhor to taste of sweet and delicious things, but let us rather desire to feed upon such things as are vile and bitter. Let us wish that all our meats may yield unto us a taste rather of gall than honey, because *Christ* Himself had given Him vinegar and gall to drink. And that I may comprehend all in one word, let us consider what things He suffered for us, and how He carried Himself in all His sufferings, and let us for our model (so much as we can) conform ourselves unto Him.

2. A man ought to consider the *Passion* of

Christ to compassionate it. For we ought to consider His scourgings, mockings, and revilings, and often ponder and think in our heart how great was the despite and contempt that was used against our Lord *Jesus Christ*; how great was the dolour and affliction He suffered both in soul and body; and to consider that all His *Passion* and *compassion* was for us and our sins.

Let us therefore think with ourselves with how great bitterness He that was the delight and sweetness of Angels was at that time filled, and how much it was that afflicted Him—not only the pain inflicted and our ingratitude, but also the sorrow and affliction of His Mother that stood by, whom He so dearly loved, and saw even to faint and almost die through *compassion* of His *Passion*. The Son was there crucified with His Mother, and by reason of the reciprocal love of the one towards the other, and the mutual compassion between them, exceeding great was the affliction of them both; and it was so much the greater because the one suffered for the other. For the Mother knew full well that her Son suffered as well for *her* as for the redemption of others; and the Son knew, and most evidently saw, that the sword of pain and sorrow which wounded *Him* did also, through compassion, pierce the soul of His dear *Mother*. Whence it was that the *Passion* of the Son was also the *Passion* of the Mother.

Go to, then, O Christian man! Turn and turn

over again these things in thy heart, and fill thy whole heart with these reproaches and dolours which thou seest thy Lord and Spouse to suffer for thee. For if thou wert united to Him by love, it could not be but thou wouldst be moved with compassion towards Him. But if thou feelest not the pain of Him Who is thy Head, how art thou one with Him? And if we ought to compassionate our head more than any of our other members, then oughtest thou, without comparison, more to compassionate Him than thy dearest son or friend—nay, more than thy own self—if thou shouldst suffer all that He suffered.

Now, therefore, dearly beloved, let us make ourselves drunk with gall, wormwood, and myrrh, and let us feel nothing else but the pain and smart of His wounds. Let His reproaches, scourges, and wounds pierce the very inwards of our hearts, and let there be nothing in us that shall not through compassion be sensible of his pains and bitter *Passion*.

3. Let us consider His *Passion* to *admire* the same; for if we consider *who, what, for whom, and of whom* He suffered, we shall find great cause of admiration.

Who He was that suffered—namely, the true and very Son of God, most potent, wise, and good—and, in a word, what excellency soever you can ascribe unto Him, all is nothing in regard of His greatness. All things in the world, be they never so good and great, yet are they but

a small sparkle of fire in respect of *His* splendour—nay, they are as mere vanity itself or as a thing of nothing in comparison of *Him*.

But *what* suffered He ? Travails, banishment, thirst, hunger, heat and cold, temptations, fears, persecutions, observings and watchings of Him, spittings, revilings, bindings, scourgings, mockings, dolours, stripes, and wounds. Glory is most despitely spit upon, Justice is condemned, the Judge of all the world is judged, the guileless is accused, the innocent disgraced, God blasphemed, *Christ* trampled upon by wicked miscreants, Life killed, the Sun obscured, the Moon blackened, the Stars dispersed ; and all this He suffers with patience as a meek lamb ; whereas, if He would, even with His only beck, He is able to plunge all creatures into the abyss of hell.

But *for whom* did He suffer all these things ? Even for most wicked slaves, for His utter enemies, for men no better than devils incarnate, and, by imitation, the very children of the devil ; for contemners of the Divine Majesty, and ungrateful to the goodness and bounty of Almighty God ; so that such and so great a One hath suffered such and so great things for most vile, abject, and base men.

But *of whom* did He suffer these things ? Of those whom He loved best and chose before all others in the world, and to whom He showed all mercy that could be ; He that was the best, of them

that were the worst and vilest ; the most wise, of the foolish (for He was the virtue and wisdom of God) ; the most pious, of the impious ; the eternal beauty, of most nasty and offensive corruption. In all these, then, let us be lifted up with admiration of the Divine bounty and goodness.

4. Let us consider the *Passion* for *exultation*. We ought to rejoice because thereby man is redeemed, the company of Angels repaired, and God's infinite mercy manifested. Out of doubt we ought to be exceedingly joyful, for the redemption of man made by the death and *Passion* of *Christ*. For who is there, I pray, that would not rejoice and be glad to see himself by this most blessed *Passion* freed from eternal damnation, the ignominy of sin, and the power of the devil ? But who would not rejoice beyond all measure to see the love of God to be so great towards man as that for *him* He would submit Himself to so great pain and baseness ? I do not say that he should rejoice for *his baseness and Passion*, but for the effect thereof, and for the manifestation thereby of God's love and affection.

What Prince is there that, being in the kingdom or empire of some Emperor or King, and should see himself to be so much beloved of the said Emperor or King as that he were ready to die for him, would not rejoice and be glad ? How much more, then, ought we that are most vile men, most wicked sinners and slaves, to rejoice

and be glad when we see the King of kings and Lord of lords and our Creator *Christ Jesus* so to love us as to sacrifice Himself for us by so shameful and vile a death !

We ought also to be even transported beyond ourselves with excessive joy, because hereby God shows Himself to love us incomparably more than we do ourselves.

Let us also rejoice and be glad because that by the *Passion* of *Christ* the ruin of Angels is restored and made good again. For we ought greatly to rejoice when we see by Christ's death so noble a company and society to be repaired with us, to the end there may be one sheepfold and one Shepherd, and we may be all of us one in one. For herein ought the Celestial Court and also the militant Church to rejoice. O truly amiable and venerable *Passion* of our Saviour, which dost thus conjoin things disjoined, and combinest together things so far asunder, most strongly uniting and tying them together with the bond of perfect love and the felicity of everlasting joy !

But we ought most chiefly to rejoice because in all that I have said we may behold the exceeding great clemency and mercy of our Lord and God *Jesus Christ*. This I think to be the chiefest glory of all good, both men and Angels—to wit, when they most seriously and profoundly contemplate the clemency and great goodwill of God, and meditate on the immensity of His goodness. And this ought to be the most hearty and inward

rejoicing of every contemplative person. For where, I pray, doth more appear the diffusion of the Divine bounty and most benign clemency of our most sweet and loving God and Lord *Jesus Christ* than in His *Passion*, where He would suffer such and so great things, so shameful and painful, for the freeing and glorifying of His enemy, that is no better than mere vanity or a thing of nothing, and altogether worthy of eternal death? Let man, then, enter into consideration of this joy, and be recreated with the magnificence of the Divine bounty. Let him seriously ponder these things, and let the most excellent and ineffable clemency of *Christ's Passion* be erected and set up in his heart.

5. We may consider the most Blessed *Passion* of *Christ* for the resolving of our hearts and the perfect transformation of ourselves into Him: which is done when a man doth not only *imitate, compassionate, admire, and rejoice*, but also is wholly converted into Him—that is, into our Lord *Jesus Christ crucified*, insomuch that *Christ crucified* appears in him in every place and at all times; yea, *then* is man truly *resolved* into Him, when, going forth of himself, and placed *above* all things—yea, abstracted *above* himself from all things—he is wholly converted into his Lord crucified, so that he neither sees nor feels anything within himself but *Christ crucified*, mocked, reviled, and suffering for him.

6. We may consider the most vile *Passion*

of *Christ* for the *quiet* of our inward sweetness, which is, when a man being resolved (as I said) and very thirsty, doth not cease to meditate upon the said *Passion*, and entering according to his power into the treasury of the *Passion*, doth humbly and devoutly melt away with Divine love and fervent devotion, and through love goes out of himself and rests in *Christ crucified*. And by how much the more he adheres unto *Him*, by so much the more he faints in himself and melts away with most devout love. And by how much the more he faints and falls away from himself through love and devotion, by so much the more he adheres to his Beloved, crucified for *him*, and doth more repose and rest in Him. And so the adhesion of love and devotion do mutually increase one another, until the Spouse be altogether absorbed and consumed in the fiery furnace of love of the *Passion* of her Beloved. Then doth she fall asleep, and quietly take her rest in the arms of her husband, that cries and says : *I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that you do not cause to be roused from sleep my beloved, until she herself will* (Cant. ii. 7).

So, then, in the *Passion* of our Lord, there ought to be an *imitation*, for the purging of our minds and placing our love therein ; *compassion*, for the uniting of ourselves unto Him ; *admiration*, for the elevating of our minds ; *exultation*, for the dilating and enlarging of our hearts ; a *resolution* and melting of us into a perfect conformity with

Him ; and, last of all, *repose* and quietness, for the composing of ourselves in holy devotion towards Him.

CHAPTER V

HOW THE PASSION OF CHRIST MAY BE APPLIED TO
THE FOUR AFFECTIONS OF THE MIND

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. Joy. | 2. Grief. |
| 3. Hope. | 4. Fear. |

BUT let us not yet cease to meditate upon the most glorious *Passion* of *Christ*, that by it we may be directed in every good affection of the heart, in virtue and wisdom, and in all our thoughts, words, and works. But first let us see concerning the four affections of the mind, which are *joy* and *grief*, *hope* and *fear*.

1. In this most *blessed Passion* we have matter and cause of *rejoicing* after the best and most noble manner that may be, and also of expelling from us all unprofitable and hurtful joy. For where is there matter of greater joy and gladness than here in the *Passion* of *Christ* ? by which we are freed from the power of the devil, quitted and discharged both from sin and all punishment due thereunto, adopted into the sons of God, and joined to *Christ* in marriage. And likewise because hereby grace is bestowed, heaven opened, and glory not only offered, but given unto us.

Where is there any greater and more excellent matter of joy than in seeing ourselves to be so exceedingly beloved of God as that He would suffer so much for us? There is also here matter of expelling all unprofitable and hurtful joy. For in considering the most vile *Passion* of our Lord we may see how that we ought utterly to renounce and forsake all corporal consolation, all bodily pleasure, and all human praise and honour.

2. There is also in this most vile *Passion* of *Christ* matter of exceeding great *grief*. For in the consideration and meditation hereof we ought to be most intimately and feelingly affected towards Him with *grief* and compassion. We ought to commiserate Him, and be exceedingly sorry that our sins were the cause of so great abjection and immense affliction.

3. There is also here matter of *hope*, for *He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him to death for us all, how will He not with Him give us all things?* (Rom. viii. 32).

4. There is likewise here matter of vehement *fear*. For if God-man suffered for our sins, in Whom there could be no sin, how much more, then, shall the sinners themselves be punished? For *if it be thus done to the green tree, what will be done to the dry and withered?* (Luke xxiii. 31). But join *joy* and *sorrow*, *hope* and *fear*, together, the one with the other, lest you fall into despair or presumption. And thus appears the manner of applying the *Passion* to the four affections of the mind.

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE PASSION OF OUR LORD MAY BE APPLIED
TO VIRTUES, AND FIRST OF ALL TO—

1. Faith.

2. And afterwards to the rest.

1. Now let us see a little concerning Divine virtues. And first, what shall we say of *faith*? I say that it is the strength and foundation of all Christian religion. For I demand whether it was God that suffered or no? If it was, then I have my desire, because the *Passion* doth demonstrate His true humanity, and so it is manifest that He was both true God and man. But if you doubt hereof, I will then prove unto you from His *Passion* that He was God. For if He was not God, and yet said He was God, then He was the proudest of all men—yea, and of devils, too, for Lucifer himself never said he was God, although otherwise he sought to be *like the Most High* (Isa. xiv. 14). But it is altogether a thing impossible for one so proud to endure so great dejection, mocking, pain, and such an ignominious death so willingly, humbly, and meekly—yea, and to be so willing to be reputed and reckoned among sinners. How is it, then, that *Christ* would show Himself to be God, that so often concealed the same? But if he was not God, and yet notwithstanding would show Himself to be God, then to the uttermost


of all His power He would have concealed and kept from the eyes and knowledge of men His infirmities, frailties, and dejections. And therefore He would not have showed Himself to have suffered hunger, thirst, pain, nor weariness, nor to have wept, feared, or grieved ; but if He had had any such infirmities, He would have done what He could to conceal them. Neither would He have been careful in any case to show Himself to be man, especially passible and mortal, but rather to have made show and ostentation of all the pomp, glory, and magnificence He could, that thereby He might be thought to have been God. And it would have sufficed one that was proud to be reputed God, neither would he care in any wise to be accounted man.

Seeing it is most difficult for one to believe both these together, and it would little avail for the advancement and honour of one that was proud to be accounted a mortal man, why, then, I pray, did He say : *My soul is heavy even unto death* (Matt. xxvi. 38)? Or why did He call Himself the Son of man ?

If you say that He suffered not voluntarily, but against His will, this cannot be, because He Himself said : *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered to be crucified*, etc. (Matt. xx. 18). Why did He foretell these things ? If you say He did it to deceive, this is most unlikely, that anyone would suffer himself to be put to death that thereby he might deceive

others. If you say that He only seemed to die, but indeed died not, to this I answer that it was not possible that any man, though never so malicious or diabolical—nay, not the devil himself—would have done this, for this was not the way to make any believe one that was *not* God to *be* God, but rather the contrary. Which is apparent, because His disciples went their ways and left Him, and, as it is commonly said, *The faith of the Church did then remain in the Blessed Virgin alone*. For it is a most simple and incredible thing (neither may one speak or think it) that a man, though never so diabolical, would seek to be adored of all as God by so ignominious a death and so base dejection, but rather the contrary, seeing the *Passion of Christ is to the Jews a scandal and to the Gentiles foolishness* (1 Cor. i. 23). From which most glorious *Passion* we may argue and conclude *Jesus Christ* to be not only true and very man, but also very God and Lord of all.

Again, if He had sought and desired only human praise, would He not, think you, have come down from the Cross when the Jews said, *Let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him* (Matt. xxvii. 42)? For this ignominious *Passion* was not a fit way for a man to deceive the people withal, as hath been showed; yet, notwithstanding, it was most agreeable to God, by which He might redeem mankind by reason of His goodness, power, and wisdom, Who



purchased our redemption and salvation by obeying His Father even unto death.

2. And this most glorious *Passion* of *Christ* is not only the foundation of our *faith*, but also the pillar of our *hope*, by giving Himself for us, and likewise the inflaming of our *charity*, by sacrificing Himself for us.

It is also the example and pattern of most perfect *prudence*, *temperance*, *fortitude*, and *justice*, as most manifestly appears to them that have understanding.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE SEVEN DEGREES OF CONTEMPLATING THE
PASSION ACCORDING TO THE SEVENFOLD GRACE
OF THE HOLY GHOST

1. Of wisdom.
2. Of understanding.
3. Of counsel.
4. Of fortitude.
5. Of knowledge.
6. Of piety.
7. Of the fear of God.
8. A most devout and excellent device
to get compunction.

IN this most blessed *Passion* there doth most gloriously shine the mirror of *wisdom* and *understanding*, of *counsel* and *fortitude*, of *knowledge*, *piety*, and the *fear of God*. But to tell how the chiefest wisdom is therein, and how the most

perfect understanding is in meditating thereof, and how wise the consideration thereof will make a man—to speak, I say, of all these and other gifts severally would be too long and tedious.

Yet notwithstanding, most dear brother, in this most excellent *Passion*, which I am not worthy to name, you may most evidently behold seven ascents or degrees of contemplation, according to the sevenfold grace of the Holy Ghost—that is to say, the gift of *wisdom, understanding*, etc.

I. For in this most vile and despicable *Passion* he that is crucified together with *Christ* doth ascend to the top of contemplation by the gift of *wisdom* after this manner—that is to say, when a man considers that the most potent was contemned and trampled upon for *us*, that the most wise was mocked and derided like a fool, that He Who was the best of all was replenished with gall and bitterness, and, like a wicked miscreant, adjudged to a most shameful death. From hence doth the mind arise unto a certain admiration of so great favour and bounty of God towards *us*, that are altogether unworthy. And then, having diligently pondered the *Passion* of his Lord *Jesus*, and therein admiring the most excellent bounty of our Lord God towards *us* His vile servants, the desire of his mind and fervour of his love begin to be carried towards Him; and meditating with a certain greediness upon this most excellent *Passion* and immense clemency

of our Saviour, the taste and relish of his mind begin after a manner to be refreshed, and his appetite to be delighted with ineffable sweetness, and the whole interior man to be alienated and separated from himself and quieted in *Christ*.

O most wonderful thing, and from the beginning of the world never the like heard of—namely, that unspeakable sweetness should be found in the greatest bitterness, and in this consists the meditation of the contemplative, because he joins together the chiefest and greatest delight of sweetness which he feels in the consideration of that wonderful clemency and mercy whereby He vouchsafed to die for us with the inestimable bitterness which he feels in compassionating the dolours of our Lord *Jesus Christ* crucified. For the bitterness of compassion doth recollect and unite his mind, and his admiration of the Divine mercy in the said *Passion* doth elevate his mind after it is united, and doth wholly diffuse it in God.

O admirable composition! O ineffable potion! O invaluable confection! O unspeakable commixtion! Excessive grief of inward compassion, immensive joy of the Divine bounty! And because there is found *there* unspeakable bitterness with unspeakable sweetness, therefore between both these the mind of the contemplative is astonished, and he, being inebriated, doth wholly cast himself on God. In the compassion of *that* bitterness the soul is

purified as gold in the furnace, and in the consideration of *that* clemency and bounty the soul is illustrated from the Sun of justice. By *that* bitterness a man is made most innocent, and by *that* bounty he is made most learned. The interior man by *that* bitterness is made most abstracted, and by the greatness of *that* clemency he is made most Divine and heavenly. What shall I say? By this interior contemplation he is rapt in ecstasy, and absorbed in the Divine clemency, and then doth the Spouse quietly repose with her Beloved, and with wonderful sweetness take her repose with Him.

2. In the aforesaid most lovely *Passion* there is also an ascent by the gift of *understanding*, after this manner. Inasmuch as man considers that the Son of God for the redemption of *him* would sustain so great pains and torments, he bethinks himself how noble and excellent his soul is, for the redeeming of which the Son of God would suffer death, and by this he is encouraged to more noble and excellent things. And because he knows *that* most precious blood to have been poured out and shed for the washing of his soul, he therefore scorns to defile himself with the filthiness of sin. Because he knows by *that* most blessed *Passion* the ruin of Angels is repaired and made up again with men, he is hereby put in mind to live an angelical life, and to have his conversation in heaven. And because he sees Christ upon the Cross wholly exposed for *us* to

all manner of pain and tribulation, all things do therefore now seem light unto him, so as he may live wholly and only to *Him* and please *Him*. He considers how exceedingly he is beloved of *Christ*, Whom he sees to be so ignominiously and cruelly dealt withal for *him*, and being inflamed with the love of *Him*, he endeavours all he can to enter into that most blessed side which he knoweth to be open *for* him and *to* him. His mind is inflamed like fire, and he desires with all his heart to be crucified wholly with *Christ*. He sighs and pants and is sore afflicted with desire to be all over besprinkled with His *Passion*, and wholly transformed into his Lord crucified. He esteems himself to be in bondage and great misery unless he may be conserved in the blood of his Redeemer. He accounts himself not a man, but a beast—yea, and worse than a beast—unless he may be clothed with the livery of the *Passion* of his Lord. He resolves never to neglect or forget so noble a benefit of God, and therefore he doth always without intermission meditate upon the said *Passion*. For as he would always continue redeemed, so would he continually bear in his heart the price of his redemption. He reputes *Christ* crucified to be his life and delight, and therefore doth he ever converse with Him. Oh, how great is his dolour and sadness when he feels his heart to be inclined to anything else ! He hath inebriated himself with the blood of *Christ*, and therefore *now* he refuses to enjoy any

other thing. For the blood of *Christ* dyes his cheeks with an excellent colour, that by this beautiful tincture of *Christ Christ's* Spouse may be fair and pure. For she acknowledgeth that by the opening of His side she is joined to Him in indissoluble union, and therefore she will always stand by His side. She touches and caresses her Beloved that is wounded, and her heart is wholly wounded with Him. She applies her heart to the wounds of her loved One; she ties and binds it thereto with a true lovers' knot that can never be loosed, and so the wounded Spouse is made one with her wounded Beloved, and one wound is joined to another. The blood of the loved One doth issue forth into the wounds of his Spouse, and she faints with grief, and melts away with love, and there takes up her rest.

3. The third ascent in that most blessed *Passion* is by the gift of *counsel*, after this manner: The mind of the contemplative doth consider that our Lord *Jesus Christ* crucified was obedient to His Father, even unto the death of the Cross—subject to all contempt, debasement, and derision for *us*, seeking His Father's honour with His own disgrace and dejection, that even as we had dishonoured, so far as possibly we could, the Eternal Father by our sins, so would He dishonour and disgrace *Himself* by dying ignominiously for *us*.

He considers also that, although *Christ* was always poor, yet He was most poor on the Cross, when, being despoiled of all He had, He hung

naked thereon. He likewise considers how full of bitterness and dolours He was on the Cross, even *He* that was the sweetness and the comfort of Angels. For all corporal delight and consolation was separated far from Him.

From the consideration of these things the mind ascendeth to the enduring of the like afflictions, and desires to abstract itself from all desire of honour, and from all possession of outward things, and from all corporal consolation.

First of all, therefore, beholding *Christ* his Lord contemned and vilified, he doth now no more desire temporal *honour*, but desires with all his heart to suffer and endure with his Lord all injury, abjection, and derision, by which he may in some measure be conformable to Him, and to this purpose he abhors honours as most filthy and loathsome. Now he desires no more to please men, but rather as much as in him lies to displease all, and to be hated and abhorred of all, yet always to the honour of God. And although he might equally and indifferently enjoy both, yet he would rather choose to be dispraised than honoured and praised. For to be praised he esteems as most filthy and loathsome corruption, and therefore he seeks after the praise of God only, to which he is wholly bent, and into which he is wholly resolved, and with an unquenchable thirst he doth earnestly labour for God's honour in all things. He now no more returns to himself, nor to any other

creature, but wholly and directly bends himself to God. His mind doth then most of all rejoice when with his own dispraise he can honour God, because his heart longs after both these, and he beholds them both in his *Christ* crucified.

But what shall I say of poverty? He would always be naked with *Him* that hung naked on the Cross, for it is extreme grief to him to have anything, but great joy to have nothing, either for possession or use, for poverty is very pleasant unto him. But because necessity or spiritual utility permits him not, but that he must needs use the help of other things, therefore, so far as he sees them to make for the glory of God, he keeps them, but yet as a sharp sword in his heart. And therefore he uses as few things as possibly may be, disburthening himself of all he can, neither doth he delight in the *addition* and *multiplication* of many things to him, but rather rejoices in the *subtraction* of them from him.

But what shall I say of *corporal comfort and delights*? He withdraws himself so much as he can from all consolation that is not *from* God or according to God. He always desires to be replenished with bitterness and affliction with *Christ*. Whatever is pleasant, or any way makes for the delight of his body, he abhors with all his heart. He cannot rejoice nor be glad unless he see himself to be made conformable to those most despicable wounds. Consola-

tions are grievous unto him, but he rejoices in all manner of bitternesses and dolours.

So, then, this excellent contemplative, by the gift of wisdom in the *Passion* of *Christ*, abstracting himself from all outward things, and bending himself wholly for God, is elevated above all things, and being separated from himself, his heart and his meditation is conversant and busied only about the honour of God, and the abasement and the affliction of *Christ*. Now he converses with *Christ* alone, and is employed about the Divine honour, eternal riches, and the incomprehensible delights of God. His soul inhabits and reposes in the aforesaid *Passion*, his heart is sweetened in his Lord God, his breast doth melt away, his mind is elevated above itself, and his soul is inebriated with spiritual delights and buried in them.

4. The fourth ascent in the aforesaid *Passion* is by the gift of *fortitude*, after this manner: The soul, diligently pondering the *Passion* of her Lord, considers the fortitude of *Christ* in *encountering*, *suffering*, and *subduing*. In *encountering* so willingly such opprobrious assaults, by offering Himself to endure such vile and cruel torments for us idolaters, and His utter enemies. In *suffering* such vile and bitter things of His creature, which He could, if He pleased, destroy in a moment, showing Himself in all to be a most meek lamb—yea, and beyond all comparison a great deal more mild. And in submitting

Himself to the death of the Cross He subdued the devil, and by dying destroyed death.

So in like manner the valiant champion of *Christ* and imitator of his Lord, by how much the more difficult and ignominious he sees a thing to be, by so much the more fervently, eagerly, and willingly doth he venture thereon and *encounter* it, yet so as it be to the glory and praise of God, the salvation of others, or the profit of his own soul, all which makes for the honour of his Lord. For he conceives no difficulty or ignominy at all in anything, so long as he does it for *Him* that endured so much for so unworthy a creature as *himself*. Nay, rather he thinks all things to be sweet, lovely, laudable, and to be desired. By how much the more anything is conformable to the ignominious *Passion*, by so much the more willingly he receives the same, he doth the more greedily embrace it. Such things as these he seeks for ; his mind runs on them ; he earnestly desires to have his fill of them. He says not, *Wherefore is this or that burthen imposed and laid upon me ?* but he says, *Why do I not undertake and do this or that most grievous and base work ?*

From hence, also, he endeavours to imitate his Lord *Jesus* in the *enduring* of wrongs and pains. For he is as a lamb, and therefore he is altogether dumb and silent before them that fleece him, mock him, and scourge him. Yea, in the midst of all these his heart smiles and is merry within

him, seeing himself to be made conformable to his Lord, and to suffer for his defects, and that thereby his Lord is honoured.

He also imitates his Lord in fortitude of *subduing*, for he has all his appetites in subjection, so that they desire nothing that is hurtful, vain, or unprofitable. He keeps his heart as a most strong castle, not suffering such things only as are hurtful, but even such also as are idle and unprofitable, to wander there. He keeps his heart with all diligence, and he will be always thinking of things that are Divine and tending to God.

And because as long as we are in this life it is so that the chaff is always mingled with the wheat, he doth therefore always hold the fan in his hand continually to winnow and purge his floor. In the door of his heart he places a brandished sword, to keep the same diligently, as the Paradise of God. What cogitation soever of his heart would eat of the tree of life, *that* he doth with all care and diligence foster and nourish; but if any thought do but so much as cast an eye at one side to the forbidden tree, he straightway cuts it off from his heart. *There* the winding serpent finds no entrance, *there* is not found an effeminate thought, or if by chance there be, it is presently expelled with all violence and disgrace, and only such as are manly are *there* harboured and nourished.

He only can be a true and Divine contempla-

tive that is of a purified heart and a clean body. For such a one lifts not his eyes to things that are vain, nor his ears to things that are unprofitable or hurtful, nor his nose to things odoriferous and sweet, nor his taste to things pleasant and delightful, nor his touch to things lascivious and effeminate; but as well interiorly as exteriorly he wholly keeps himself with all diligence, and rules over himself as fully as one possibly can in this life. And so, by reason of his purity, he is most fit for the receiving of Divine illustrations. The Sun of justice most willingly inhabits in such a pure and clean dwelling-place, and shines in all the corners thereof. The brightness of this Sun shines in the most inward and secret place thereof, because it finds no hindrance nor resistance. It shines and never leaves shining until the same pure heart be absorbed of the Divine brightness. Then doth the soul *lift itself up above itself* (Lam. iii. 28). It enters into the Divine darkness, and there doth it cry out and say: *And the night is my light in my delight* (Ps. cxxxviii. 11).

5. The fifth ascent in the ignominious *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is by the gift of *science* or knowledge. And if you would obtain the gift of science, and wisely converse in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation, you will find a most excellent and clear mirror thereof in this contemptible *Passion*. And we may obtain the aforesaid gift of *science*, as it is the knowledge of

inferior things, so far as they be helps and aids to the contemplation of spiritual and celestial things ; and this we may find in the *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, especially in the consideration of the types and figures thereof, and you shall *there* find wonderful treasure hidden under these figures, in which admirable sweetness and satiety for the soul is bestowed on them that dig for the same with labour and diligence.

See, then, how the figures and the accomplishing of the Divine Scriptures are manifested in the *Passion* of our Lord, and from thence be higher elevated in the admiration of the wisdom and clemency of God our Father, that hath so carefully ordained all things for our profit. Let us, therefore, so much as we can, apply all things to *Christ* crucified. Let us say : *In the beginning God created heaven and earth*—that is to say, in His Son crucified He restored again the nature of men and Angels—that is, by redeeming of men, and repairing of Angels with men. *God said, Let there be light.* He being on the Cross is *light*, expelling all obscurity of sin, by His presence making it to be day, and by His absence night. *He made also the firmament in the midst of the waters*, on the Cross separating temporal consolations from eternal ; or, separating the waters of human wisdom from the waters of the Divine ; or, separating the waters of vices from the waters of graces ; or the waters of tribulations from the waters of Divine consolations. Moreover, in

Christ hanging on the Cross *the waters that were under heaven were gathered together*, because God put *therein* our iniquities—that is, the punishment due for our iniquities. And in *Him* was most truly the gathering together of the waters, because in *Him* was the deluge of all afflictions, dolours, reproaches, and disgraces, and therefore by His grace *the earth appeared dry*. For we that for our sins were most worthy of the inundation of all pain and punishment, and deserved that the cataracts of God's wrath should fall upon us, are freed by the merit of His *Passion*. By reason whereof He was the great and spacious sea, and deep beyond all measure.

And thus run over all the Scriptures, according as God shall enable you, because you shall find infinite things therein which most excellently decipher and set forth the *Passion* of our Lord. And if they were beyond all comparison far more than they are, yet they were not sufficient fully to declare the same. And if any would well and diligently make a collection of Scriptures, and see in what thing this or that place doth demonstrate and show the *Passion* of *Christ*, he would see in them an admirable correspondence, and hear in them marvellous sweet melody, which would wonderfully delight his heart, and cause him to enter into the sanctuary of God.

Take one type or figure of the *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ* (though, perhaps, it may seem a strange one), and you shall see what great

sweetness there is contained therein if it be meditated upon with heed and diligence, as it ought to be.

See, then, I pray, the figure of *Abraham* (Gen. xviii.), concerning the calf which he gave to the three Angels to eat, what great sweetness of contemplation it contains, which in appearance seems to be little or nothing. What an exceeding great sweetness, then, doth that contain in it which even at the very first sight doth thus sweeten the mind, as is that of *the tree of life in the midst of Paradise* (Gen. ii. 9)—that is to say, of *Christ* upon the tree of the Cross in the midst of His Church, or in the heart of the Blessed Virgin His Mother, who was like this garden watered with the fountain, which *issued from the place of pleasure*—that is, from the wound in the side of *Christ*, etc.

What is it, I pray, that *Abraham* gave a young and tender calf out of the flock to the three men to eat, but that God the Father delivered up to the death of the Cross for our iniquities His only-begotten Son, that was most innocent—yea, and *full of grace and truth* (Isa. i. 14)? And what is it that the three men did eat the calf, but that by His *Passion* the whole Trinity was satisfied, which before had hungered after justice for our iniquities? In this, then, appears the sweetness of this figure, that by *Abraham* is understood God the Father, and by the calf His Son, and by the three men the whole Trinity, whereas the Father

and the Son are not distinguished from the Trinity itself, but because they are two persons of the three. In this appears, I say, the ineffable and wonderful sweetness of the contemplative's heart, because God, hungering after justice, out of His great bounty receives the judgment thereof upon Himself. Otherwise His hunger of justice had devoured us, because there was nothing to satisfy that greedy and hungry appetite but this most tender calf.

God the Father, then, delivered up His Son to all affliction and derision to satisfy Himself, and His Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the injury done unto them by us. What is the meaning of this? Because we offended Him, would He therefore judge *Himself*? Could He not otherwise be revenged than by undergoing *Himself* the punishment of our offence? It was *Christ* that was offended *by us*, and also judged *of us*, and *in us*, and *for us*, and that according to His divers natures, so that the same person was offended and judged. Eat, then, O most sweet brother, of this calf of *Abraham* if you will have an admirable refection.

Consider also that which follows in this figure. After the eating of the calf a Son is promised to *Abraham* to be born of *Sara* his wife, whenas notwithstanding they were both old and well-stricken in years. What is the meaning of this? Is *Christ*, who is understood by Isaac, born again after the death of Christ? Yea, truly, in our

hearts. For this *Abraham*, an old man, is God the Father, who in Daniel (vii. 9) is called the *Ancient of Days*, by reason of the pre-eminence of authority which was wont to be among the aged. For in *Him* there is no succession or vicissitude of duration. For although, because of His immensity, His duration is the interminable and eternal possession of life, yet notwithstanding for the great simplicity, it is all together. This ancient Father, after the eating of the calf, begot *Isaac* of *Sara* that was old—that is to say, He sent His only Son, whom He begot from all eternity after He was sacrificed for us on the Cross, into our minds, inveterated and made old with all manner of wickedness, not by mutation of place, but by the illustration of our minds; and then we might well laugh, because we could behold with our eyes the pleasant light and delightful Sun of justice. And therefore most truly is *Isaac* termed our *laughter*.

But was it not a wonderful thing that one so old as *Abraham* was should beget a son of one so old as *Sara* his wife? Even so is it worthy of all admiration and thanksgiving that He which is of most sovereign Majesty, and most ancient by reason of the pre-eminence of His authority, would be mindful of our most vile and sinful souls, that were aged with all iniquity? But this seems to be most wonderful of all, that it was after the death of the calf—that is, His Son, of Whom we had *then* worthily deprived ourselves,

because we put Him to death. Our most bountiful Lord, therefore, when both the time and our wickedness were waxen old, did well *for us*, though we did evil to *Him* in killing His Son, Whom also by His death He gave unto us. See, then, and consider the marvels of God. But are you not grieved in heart? *In the latter days, now Sara being old.* What if *Sara* had been dead? What if *He* who deferred so long had stayed a little longer? Had we not perished in our iniquities? Where had *Isaac* our *laughter* been then? Was it not because *our* iniquities abounded more than others' before?

We give Thee thanks, O Lord *Jesus*, we give Thee thanks, because Thou rememberedst us, notwithstanding our great demerits. I therefore owe all myself unto Thee—yea, and by infinite degrees more than all, if I could—because Thou hast not only created me, but also of Thine infinite mercy redeemed me. I will therefore approach and wholly adhere and be attentive to Thee. Oh, let my heart rest *in* Thee, and from henceforward never range in bypaths *from* Thee.

Thus, then, in the aforesaid *Passion* ought the mind to be elevated by the knowledge of types and figures that are correspondent and prefiguring this most ignominious *Passion*. For man ought with great diligence to consider them, and by the consideration of them enter into the treasures of the Divine bounty and goodness, until he be so high lifted up that all his mind be

wholly poured forth into *Christ*, his wounded Lord, and his heart be wholly absorbed in His love. But this is the gift of God, at Whose hands he ought to demand and seek the same, doing what lies in him, and let him commit the rest to God.

6. The sixth ascent is by the gift of *piety*. For when man considers the most intimate bowels of piety and mercy which our Lord *Jesus Christ* poured forth *upon* us when He suffered death on the Cross *for* us, his heart is moved and opened towards his neighbour, so as he would willingly give himself wholly to him for his salvation for whom he sees his Lord to be crucified. His heart is enlarged with the blood of *Christ* his Redeemer, and as he compassionates with all his heart his Lord *Jesus Christ* hanging on the Cross, so doth he inwardly, and as though it were his own case, grieve for his neighbour, whom he sees departing from these wounds—nay, trampling that most precious blood under his feet. His heart, therefore, is wounded within him for the contempt of his wounded Lord, and for the compassion of his neighbour that wilfully changes a blessed life for an eternal death. He sees God contemned, the death of *Christ*, the only-begotten Son of God, to be despised, and His most precious blood trampled under foot, the most noble creature in all the world (moulded and framed according to the image of God Himself), to run wilfully headlong to hell torments. And as he is sorry for the

wicked, so he is joyful and glad for the good, seeing them to receive in themselves the effect of *Christ's* wounds. He enters with all persons into those wounds, and is made one with them. He rejoices with *them* that rejoice for good, and is sorry with *them* that are sorry for evil. He esteems his neighbour to be himself, knowing that himself and his neighbour are created by the same Lord, stamped with the same image, redeemed with the same blood, and predestinated to the same reward.

And hence it is principally that he doth open his heart to his neighbour, because he sees his Lord crucified for *all*, and therefore, so far as he can, he considers and beholds him in all—that is to say, contemplating his *Christ*, he is wholly his neighbour's, because he is wholly Christ's. Oh, what gladness of heart, what rejoicing is it to him, when he sees his neighbour to honour his Lord by good works ! He envies him not, nor emulates him ; he detracts him not, nor is any cause of let and hindrance to him, either by signs, words, or deeds ; but wholly thirsts after the spiritual profit of his neighbour, and hinders all those things that make for his disprofit, reputed *both* as his own. Which thing is exceeding pleasing to our Lord *Jesus Christ* crucified, because, out of the Fatherly love which He bare unto us, He was for the salvation of all nailed to the Cross.

The salvation of souls, the honour of God, the

compassion of a man's neighbour, and the inflaming of one's self, are principally to be considered in the wounds of *Christ*, and so by the gift of *piety* his soul is after a wonderful manner, elevated to his God. For when man endeavours all he can to conform himself to that Divine *piety* which he manifested to us on the Cross, then doth his soul most of all please *Christ*. And therefore his soul, being thus conformable to Him, beloved of Him, and opened with *piety*, He draws it *unto* Him, embracing the same as His loving Spouse. He loves it, delights in it, and binds it fast *unto* Him, which He sees to feel the same torment *with* Him by compassionating of Him, to savour the same thing by honouring of God, to be zealous of the same thing by thirsting after the salvation of souls, and to be transformed *into* Him by most ardent love and charity.

Piety, therefore, is profitable for all things (1 Tim. iv. 8), which, seeking the honour of God, expels dolours from the soul, thirsts after the gaining of souls, and desires the blood of *Christ* in the soul, erecting and kindling therein love towards God and man.

Let us, then, most dear brethren, diligently consider this thing, for I do believe for certain that this gift among all others—nay, which is more, *above* all others—is most pleasing to our Lord God, *Jesus Christ*. Let us, therefore, do His will and pleasure, and let us extract this His *piety* from out of His side. Let all of us be one

in our Lord crucified, and let us seek in our neighbour nothing but *Jesus*, and let us be so bent towards our neighbour as that we may always rest in the wounds of *Christ* with him. Let us not look upon our neighbour as upon a fair and beautiful thing, or the like, which may withdraw our souls from *Christ*, or any ways hinder it in His love, but as upon one redeemed by the death of *Christ*, and sprinkled with His blood. Let the soul of our neighbour, together with the blood of *Christ*, enter into our heart ; let nothing be difficult to us ; let nothing seem vile or base unto us—yea, though it were to die an ignominious death for him for whom our Lord was with so great ignominy crucified. Yea, let us all desire and thirst after the salvation of souls, and to endure all affliction, all ignominy, and the shamefullest death that may be. Let every other man be as dear and sit as near unto us as our own heart, for whom the heart of our Lord *Jesus Christ* was tormented with so many dolours and afflictions. Let us multiply and increase our sermons, exhortations, good examples, prayers, fastings, kneelings, watchings, abjections, and other austerities, for the saving of souls.

Let it be our office, our glory and consolation, always to offer something to God for the souls of others. Let the fountains of tears never cease running from our eyes for our own sins and the sins of our neighbour. Let it be enough for us, most dear brethren, to be satiated and filled with

these dolours in this vale of misery. Let our own sins and the sins of our neighbour hang always before our eyes—yea, let them enter in and penetrate the most inward and secret parts of our hearts, and at all times, in all places, and in all things, let us behold how our Lord *Jesus Christ* was crucified for our sins. This ascent of *piety* doth mollify and dilate our whole heart, and place us in the arms of *Christ*.

7. The seventh degree and last ascent is by the gift of *fear*, from which all perfection, as well of *action* as of *contemplation*, is derived and conserved, so as the slavish fear be excluded. And this ascent in the *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is after this manner :

When man sees how that the Son of God—yea, his Lord God—having taken upon Him man's nature, suffered so great torments for our sins, and how grievously the most innocent Judge, and our most merciful God, punished *our* sins in His own body, then he considers what punishment, what contumelies, mockings, and scourgings he himself is worthy of who committed those sins. From hence, also, he knows how wonderful displeasing sin is to the Divine Majesty, and how detestable it is unto Him, whenas, for the purging thereof, He delivered His own Son to the death of the Cross. For even as Almighty God was highly displeased with the contempt and killing of His Son, so, out of all doubt, was He exceedingly displeased with our sins, for which

He was delivered unto death. Yea, He so much abhorred our sins as that He would rather endure the death of His Son than *them*, and He was more pleased to deliver His Son to the death of the Cross than He would endure the heinousness of sin.

Let man, therefore, see and consider how greatly he hath offended the Divine Majesty, whilst, after such a terrible and rigorous judgment executed and inflicted upon the Son of God, he hath condemned even God Himself, *crucifying again*, as much as in him lies, *the Son of God* (Heb. vi. 6).

It is a wonderful thing that man, considering how he hath offended God, doth not through extreme horror and fear always tremble and shake as an aspen-leaf that is blown to and fro with an exceeding great wind, and how, with extremity of fear, he is not resolved and converted into very earth and ashes.

Let us, then, most dear brethren, have recourse to our own vileness and wickedness, and to the Divine Majesty offended, and let us humble ourselves before Him as much as we can, for there yet remains some hope of access unto His Divine Majesty, so near as our sins will permit.

Let us be afraid to *lift up our eyes to heaven*, but, *knocking our breasts with the publican*, let us desire God to be merciful unto us sinners (Luke xviii. 13), and say: "It is much for Him to respect

us, whenas we, for most vile and loathsome filth, have despised *Him*. Let us with reverent fear of His supreme Majesty convert ourselves, so far as we can, into nothing, and from henceforward let us not think any otherwise than basely of ourselves. Let us be encouraged against our own wickedness, and be our own judges, revenging in ourselves the wrong done to our Lord, and let us, as much as we can, condemn ourselves, every one of us saying within himself : If my Lord was so vilified and afflicted for my sins, how shall I that have sinned be sparing to vilify and afflict myself ? Far be it from me that from henceforward I should presume of myself any otherwise than most detestable, vile, and abominable filth, the loathsomeness whereof I myself am not able to endure. I am he that have condemned my Lord God, for whom notwithstanding He vouchsafed to die, and therefore do my very clothes abhor me, and it is strange that all creatures in the world do not detest me because I have despised the Creator of all.

Yet ought we so to fear as that we always trust in the infinite clemency of God, for certainly His goodness, by infinite degrees, exceeds our wickedness. And this foresaid fear of humility and reverence is a means of ascending wonderful high, because by *it* man is principally led to the superabundance of grace.

8. But lest you be displeased, most dear

brother, for that by occasion of this fear I make a little digression from the *Passion* of our Lord, I intend presently to return again unto it.

To the end, therefore, that I may more fully express unto you the conceit of this fear, it seems unto me that the whole frame of this universe doth cry *after me and against me*, most wicked wretch that I am, and say : This is *he* that hath contemned, and still doth contemn, our Lord ; this is *he* that is most vain and wicked, that hath loved vanity more than God ; this is *he* that is most ungracious and ungrateful to our Lord, that is drawn more with diabolical illusions and lies than by Divine benefits. Diabolical wickedness hath been more pleasing unto him than Divine goodness, and he hath chosen rather to be the slave of the devil than the son of God. This is *he* that stood in no awe to offend God, even before His face ; this is *he* that would not be allured with mercy, nor terrified with judgment ; this is *he* that by his sins hath contemned and, as much as in him lay, derided the power, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness of God. He hath more feared to offend a weak, silly man than the God of infinite power ; he hath been more ashamed to do a filthy and unseemly thing before the face of a most base clown or peasant than to commit the most horrible offences that might be before the God of infinite wisdom ; he hath with greater affection embraced filth than the chiefest good and sweetness, whenas notwithstanding *that* was

forbidden and *this* commanded. This is *he* that hath esteemed God as nothing, that hath not adored Him for God, but loved vanity more than God. He hath turned himself to most abominable corruption, and turned his back against the Divine Majesty. What shall I say? He feared not to commit all abominations in the presence of God, neither hath he revered his Creator.

The creatures do also, after their manner, further cry and say: This is *he* that hath *abused us* in the service of sin, notwithstanding he ought to have *used us* in the service of our Creator. He hath made *us* to serve the fraud and malice of the devil, and whilst he hath loved *us* more than God, he hath done *us* a great deal of wrong. This is the most impious and ungracious man in all the world, who hath converted *us* that were made for the *honour* of God into His *dishonour*. He should have *used us* for the fulfilling of God's will, but he has *abused us* in the devil's service. His soul was *formed* according to the image of God, but he hath *deformed* it by imprinting *therein* the image of all *us*. For he hath been more earthly than the earth, more flitting and inconstant than the water, more light and vain than the air, more burning than the fire, more hard than the stones, more cruel to himself than the wild brute beasts, more venomous to others than the basilisks. What shall I say? He hath neither feared God nor revered man; he hath spread abroad his poison, so much as in him lay,

among many, sometimes in his words, and sometimes in gestures and deeds ; he hath not been contented himself to do wrong unto God, but he hath also provoked and caused others, as much as he could, to do it. What shall I say more ? He hath esteemed of himself as of I know not what great thing, but he hath made no esteem at all of the Omnipotent God, whilst he would not be ruled either by the will of God or by any other law whatsoever, but following his own swing, and walking in the paths of his own will *against* God, he hath, to his power, lifted himself up *above* God. If God at any time did not do according to his will, but did either send *unto* him some adversity which he did *not* desire, or withheld *from* him some worldly good things which he *did* desire, he would presently be as much enraged and incensed against his Lord God as though He were no better than his very servant. He loved not God for God's sake, but for *himself*, ordering and ordaining of God to *himself*, as to the end. Who also ordained the use of all things else so far as he could have them according to his will, to *himself*, as to the last and final end. And if at any time he ceased to sin, he did it not for the hatred and detestation of evil, and love of the chiefest Good, but for saving his own skin, and for the danger he feared would fall upon him, so that his aim and end in all things was his own commodity and profit, as well in *omitting* as *committing*, referring the doing

or not doing of all things to himself. He would be commended as well for good as evil, as if he had been God, by whom all things either good or evil are ordained to a good end. Why need I go any further? He hath been more proud than *Lucifer* himself, more presumptuous than *Adam*, that was driven out of Paradise, because they, being full of light and clearness, saw some motive (such as was indeed exceeding great) to draw them to presumption. But this same vile person, full of nothing but corruption, darkness, and misery, hath, on the contrary, had all the reasons and motives that might be to withdraw him from being proud.

Most worthily, therefore, do all creatures exclaim *against* me, most unworthy wretch that I am, and say: Come, and let us quite destroy him that hath been wholly bent to offend our God. Whereupon the earth, after her manner, cries and says: Why do I sustain and bear so wicked a caitiff? The water says: Why do not I drown him? The air says: Why do not I stifle him? The fires: Why do not I consume him? The stones: Why do not we stone him? Hell: Why do I not open my mouth to swallow him and torment him? Alas, alas! wretch that I am! whither shall I go, because all creatures are up in arms against me? To whom shall I have recourse? Where shall I turn me? I have practised and committed wickedness against *all*. I have contemned the Omnipotent God, pro-

voked the glorious Angels, dishonoured the blessed Saints. I have sundry ways offended men and abused all other sorts of creatures.

But why do I thus enlarge my discourse? In that I have been injurious to God the Creator of all, I have also together with *Him* offended every creature. I know not, therefore, miserable wretch that I am, where to turn me, who have made myself enemy to *all*. I cannot turn either above or below, before or behind, to the right hand or to the left, neither within nor without, where I may be safe and secure. For my conscience *frights* me, and, which is more, *fights* against me, too, and my heart is wholly divided. I will therefore howl and weep without measure or end, so long as I live and remain in this vale of misery, and it may be that my most pitiful Father will vouchsafe to cast His eye upon me.

I know what I have resolved to do. I will cast myself down in the presence of my Lord God, and say unto Him: Alas, O Lord! I am indeed Thine utter enemy, Thy most wicked servant and most abominable creature, that have committed most horrible iniquities in Thy presence. I am not worthy, good Lord, to be Thy creature though adjudged to suffer never so great pain and punishment. For if I alone should endure the pains of hell, which all the devils and damned men shall suffer, yet I should not sufficiently be punished according to my great demerits.

But stretch forth, I beseech Thee, O Lord,

upon me, Thy miserable creature, the mantle of Thine infinite clemency, and let Thy immense goodness overcome my wickedness. Acknowledge Thine image *in me*, although it be *defiled*, if not *defaced*, *by me*, and reduce me, a wandering sheep, to Thyself, who art a most loving and pitiful Shepherd. Let the most tender Father rejoice for the return of His prodigal son, the Good Shepherd for the sheep that was lost and is now found again, and the most diligent and careful Mother for having found her lost groat. Oh, how happy will that day and hour be when Thou, O loving Father, shalt fall upon my neck and kiss me !

And to the end I may appease and pacify Thee, I know what I will do. I will take up arms against myself, and will be the most rigorous and severe judge of all others to myself. I will afflict myself with all pains and punishments that may be, and I will trample upon myself, and abhor myself as most filthy dirt, and will never in any sort endure myself. In my confusion, dejection, contempt, and affliction inflicted upon me, either by myself or others, I will rejoice and be exceeding glad, especially when my ignominy shall appear and be manifest to others. And because I am not able of myself sufficiently to detest and abhor myself, I will therefore assemble and call together against me all the whole company of creatures in the world, and be confounded by every one of them, desiring also to be punished

by them, because I have contemned their Creator. This shall be the greatest treasure I will wish for—namely, to heap upon myself all pains and disgraces, and I will most heartily love all them that do any way help me herein. I will detest all the comforts and honours of this present life, and will account them as flattering and deceiving enemies.

And I do verily believe that if I shall do *this* I shall incline all creatures, though offended by me, rather to compassion than revenge, and those that before exclaimed *against* me will now, according to their manner, intercede to their Creator *for me*. The treasure of Divine pity will be opened *unto me*, though I be a most unworthy and miserable sinner, and I shall be illuminated when His glory shall appear. I will put off the garments of my widowhood, and will shine in most bright and rich array. And I am certain that if I shall debase and afflict myself, as I have said before, I that am now abominable to all creatures, and most worthy to suffer all evil, shall, by the infinite clemency of my God, be adorned with jewels and made His spouse; I shall enter with Him into the marriage chamber; I shall be wholly resolved into Him and made one with Him, and whereas before I was diabolical, I shall now be made Divine.

Oh, admirable and ineffable change of Thy right hand, O Lord my God! Why do I defer to fulfil what I have said? Why do mine eyes

receive any sleep, or mine heart rest, until I be with the Beloved of my soul—my Lord *Jesus*? Let, therefore, contempt, disgraces, and afflictions hasten from every place and light upon me, that so they may bring *me*, a most wicked miscreant, to my most loving Lord *Jesus*. Avaunt, therefore, all honour and delight, and see you be no more seen within *my* quarters, for I will seek and enjoy nothing but the honour of my God and the contempt of myself.

Moreover, I know what I will further do. I will enter into the wounds of my Lord *Jesus*, and, as much as I can, will be transformed into His dolours and disgraces, and will put on me His most ignominious *Passion* as a royal and Prince-like garment. I will desire and seek after nothing but such things as are conformable to His *Passion*; all other things I will reject and cast away from me as dirt.

What creature, then, from henceforward dares be so bold as to exclaim against me if I shall be clothed with this garment? For the *Passion* of *Christ* will fight for me, so much as is requisite, against all things whatsoever. There is nothing that will offer to make war against me if I shall be once marked with the wounds of *Christ*. I will in all places and at all times dwell in *them*, where I may be as secure as if I were in a castle, safe from the force of all my wicked enemies. And it will be impossible, most dear brother, if I shall be well transformed into *Christ* crucified,

but that I be conformable *to* Him, and be made coheir *with* Him in His kingdom, where they are the best-beloved of God that have been crucified with *Christ*. For God cannot deny Himself to *him* that is sprinkled with the blood of *Christ*. Wherefore, I will adorn my cheeks with His blood, by which I shall be amiable to God, admirable to the world, and laudable to the whole company of Saints, who will cry and say : What beautiful one is this in this robe ? Who is this that marches on so gloriously crowned with laurel, that hath been dipped in the blood of *Christ* ? Certainly all that shall have their eyes open to see me will proclaim me blessed.

Wherefore, do not doubt, my dear brother, that this is the chiefest means to avoid all evil and to obtain all good. This is the paradise of pleasure from the middle of whose side issued great abundance of all pleasure and sweetness. Man is here inebriated with ineffable delight and joy, and is ravished with wonderful pleasantness, and restored and carried into *Christ* with exceeding great devotion, and *there* he rests in the arms of his Beloved.

Let us, most dear brother, reduce all that hath been said to three things, unto which let us bend all our forces—that is to say, to *the honour and glory of God, the love and compassion of Christ and our neighbour, and, lastly, the contempt and despising of ourselves*. And let us with all our

hearts thirst after these things, and after nothing in the world else ; which He grant unto us that liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII

THAT CHRIST PERFECTLY HAD IN HIS PASSION

1. The eight Beatitudes.
2. The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost.
3. A pattern of the Ten Commandments.
4. The virtue of the Sacraments and the sense of the Scripture.

I. THE most illustrious splendour of the eight Beatitudes (Matt. v. 3) shines in this ignominious *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*—nay, here is properly the source and fountain of them, and also an example to allure and direct us to them.

For who is *poor in spirit* but *Christ* naked upon the Cross ? Who is *meek* but He that *like a sheep was led to the slaughter, and opened not His mouth before the shearer* (Isa. liii. 7) ? Who *mourned* but He that with *strong cries and tears offered up His prayers and supplications* (Heb. v. 7) for His crucifiers, and for us sinners, his mortal enemies ? whom notwithstanding He excused by interceding for us to God His Father and saying : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (Luke xxiii. 34). For He did more bewail *our sins* than His *own pain*, and was more compassionate to *us* than to *Himself*.

Who *hungered and thirsted after justice* but Christ on the Cross, by making satisfaction to His Father for our sins, hungering and thirsting after the salvation of souls? In token whereof He said : *I thirst* (John xix. 28).

Who was *merciful* but this Samaritan, that *poured wine and oil into the wounds of him that fell among thieves, whom the priest and Levite saw as they passed by, and let him alone, but Christ bound up his wounds, and set him on His own beast* (Luke x. 34)—to wit, His own body, taking upon Him our infirmities for the redemption of our sins?

Who was *patient* but He that, being just and innocent, was crucified for our sins and wickedness, Who by the force of His love and fervour of charity bore our iniquities upon the wood of the Cross?

Where shined *purity of heart* but in Him Who, being faultless, was offered up in sacrifice, cleansing and washing our hearts with His most precious blood?

Who was a *peacemaker* but He that is *our peace that made both to be one* (Eph. ii. 14), by His *Passion* reconciling us to God in His blood?

Who *suffered persecution for justice' sake*, which He had, did, preached, and thirsted after, but He that was crucified of the Jews? Certainly He was truly *blessed* Whom men blasphemed, and against Whom they spake all manner of lies.

These are the Beatitudes which Christ taught,

and exhorted us to have, and showed Himself by His own example how they are to be fulfilled.

2. In this tree of the Cross are also those most pleasant fruits which the Apostle in his fifth chapter to the Galatians (verse 22) reckons up, saying : *The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, longanimity, goodness, bounty, meekness, faith* (because *therein* is the foundation and prop of faith, and true delight in regard of the object, though not of the subject, for in Christ there was no faith); it follows, *modesty, continency, and chastity*.

All these do most evidently shine in the *Passion* of *Christ* on the Cross, and therefore most happily doth the Apostle add in the same place : *But they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences thereof*, to the end that He might most manifestly show those fruits to hang on the tree of the holy Cross, which they may gather that conform themselves to Him, and nail themselves to the said Cross.

3. There is likewise in this most blessed *Passion* a most excellent rule, example, and pattern of fulfilling the Commandments of God, that as He was obedient to God His Father, even unto death, so should we obey the Divine precepts, though it were unto death.

For as touching the *First Commandment*, inas-much as He was man, He was a perfect and most exact worshipper of God, offering Himself to God His Father on the altar of the Cross a fat sacrifice

(Ps. lxxv.), an oblation and peace-offering for sin (Lev. iii.).

Touching the *Second Commandment*, He took not the name of God in vain, neither did He swear falsely, but in the most blessed *Passion* of the Cross He fulfilled what He had sworn before to the ancient Fathers (Luke i. 73).

Touching the *Third Commandment*, He rested on the Sabbath Day in the grave, and so we in like manner ought to celebrate our Sabbaths and festival days, not in sports, pastimes, vanities, and idle discourses, but in holy rest, with giving of thanks.

As touching the *first precept of the second table*, He, being on the Cross, yielded the greatest reverence that might be to His Heavenly Father by *humbling Himself to Him, even to the death of the Cross* (Phil. ii. 8), that so, by this honour done by Him, He might satisfy for the dishonour done to His Father by *us*. He also rendered due respect and honour to His blessed Mother, to whom He was subject, not only all his lifetime, but also while He hung upon the Cross, commending her with great care and diligence to His beloved disciple (John xix. 27).

Touching the *second*, He was not only free from murder, but by His most blessed death and *Passion* He killed death, and raised to life such as were dead.

Touching the *third*, against abominable adultery, He espoused His Church unto Himself in

marriage. A most chaste Husband chose a most chaste wife, *not having spot or wrinkle* (Eph. v. 27).

Touching the *fourth*, He thought it no robbery to make Himself equal with God (Phil. ii. 6), yet notwithstanding, *making Himself of no reputation, He took upon Him the form of a servant*. Or otherwise we may say He did not steal, but rather, on the contrary, by His death He recovered what had been taken away by theft. For He descended into hell, from whence, by the merit of His *Passion*, He redeemed such as the pilfering hand of the devil had taken away from among His goods, and unjustly detained, and *leading captivity captive, He gave gifts unto men* (Eph. iv. 8).

Touching the *fifth*, He was so far from bearing false witness as that He Himself had false witnesses suborned against Him for the truth which He always spake and did, speaking blasphemy and lies against Him, for which He was condemned to death.

Touching the *sixth* and *seventh*, He was also so far from coveting the goods of others as that He gave Himself on the Cross for His neighbour. So, then, it most evidently appears how the observance of all the *Commandments* shined in the most glorious *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

4. In like manner from this sacred *Passion* all the *Sacraments* of the Church do draw their force and virtue, which are unto us most sovereign medicines against all our spiritual maladies. This

most blessed *Passion* is likewise unto us a *Davidical* key of the *Divine Scriptures*, which openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth (Apoc. iii. 7). For without this it is impossible to understand the sacred Scriptures, and this being well imprinted in the mind, all things will be more clear than noonday. Begin at *Adam*, how *Eve* was formed out of his side, and think of the tree of life in the midst of Paradise, of the sacrifices of *Abel*, and of his death. And so, if you will, you may run through the whole of the Scripture, and see how the truth thereof is manifested in the mirror of the *Passion*.

CHAPTER IX

HOW IN THE BLESSED PASSION OF OUR LORD DO
SHINE THE OFFICES OF ALL THE ANGELICAL
AND ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHIES

1. Of the first Hierarchy.
2. Of the second.
3. Of the third.
4. The reparation of the Hierarchies by the Passion.
5. The glory of the Blessed shines in the Passion.
6. And flows from it.

FROM that which hath been said before it most manifestly appears how that from the *Passion* of *Christ* doth flow the perfection of all things, and in it doth shine all beauty, both of the Ecclesiastical and Evangelical Hierarchy. And after the

same manner all perfection, beauty, and comeliness of the Angelical Hierarchy doth appear and shine *therein*.

1. For in it doth first and principally shine the *Seraphical* fervour of love, because *greater love no man hath than that one lay down his life for his friends* (John xv. 13). I do not believe that all the Angels of Paradise are able with their understandings to comprehend the vehemency of this charity, by which our Lord *Jesus* would suffer such things for *us*, His most vile slaves—nay, His most wicked enemies.

The *Cherubim* do also shine here—that is, the speculation and understanding of truth. For I know nothing in this world that doth so much elucidate the truth of Scripture, that doth so much elevate to the contemplation of heavenly things, that doth so much illuminate in the wisdom and knowledge of God, as the *Passion* of *Jesus Christ*. For here is truly found the fullness of all science.

Here doth also exceedingly shine the reverence and worship which the *Thrones* do yield unto the Eternal Majesty. For even as those celestial spirits are called *Thrones*, because God is said to rest in them as in His Throne, by reason of the great honour and reverence which they have towards the Divine Majesty (for He *rests upon the humble, and such as tremble at His sayings*) (Isa. lxvi. 2), even so in this most vile *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ* our Lord God is said

to rest as in His Throne, because there was exceeding great humility, and surpassing honour and reverence towards the Eternal Majesty. And I do verily think that the reverence of none of all the other Angels is to be compared hereunto. And therefore, that I may speak after the manner of human affection, the Spirit of God, being provoked and disquieted by our sins, was pacified and appeased by this most blessed *Passion*. Or else otherwise may the *Passion* fitly be termed the Throne of God, because by *it*—that is, by the signs thereof—He will judge the world. Wherefore I do firmly believe that at the latter day of judgment there shall appear a spear, a crown of thorns, nails, a sponge, and other such-like instruments of the *Passion*. And our Lord *Jesus* Himself will also show the prints of His wounds, and say: Behold and see what I have suffered *of* you, *in* you, and *for* you; and yet notwithstanding ye have most ungratefully despised all, making no account of My most shameful death and *Passion*. And therefore go ye *cursed into everlasting fire* (Matt. xxv. 41). And thus appears the first *Hierarchy*.

2. In this most blessed *Passion* doth also shine the excellence of the *Dominations*. For *He humbled Himself, being made obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. For which God hath exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name* (Phil. ii. 8, 9).

Here doth also shine the resistance of the

Powers, because *that* diabolical power, of which it is said that *there is no power upon earth that can be compared to it* (Job xli. 24), Christ Jesus most victoriously subdued to Himself, and by dying destroyed death.

The efficacious operation of the *Virtues* doth also shine *here*, and principally the penetrating and attractive virtue of hearts. Whence is that *When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to Myself* (John xii. 32). And therefore that we may believe in Him and love Him, let us in no wise attribute anything to ourselves, because *none cometh unless he be drawn* (John vi. 44). In which words is noted a motion, not voluntary on our part, but rather violent. And so appears the second *Hierarchy*.

3. There doth also manifestly appear in this most blessed *Passion* the regiment of the *Principalities*, because it is said : *The government is upon His shoulders* (Isa. ix. 6).

The redress also and relief of the *Archangels* is here manifested, because in this most glorious *Passion* there is made a sufficient redress, and exemption from all sin and punishment.

In this *Passion* doth likewise shine the revelation of the *Angels*, because the obscurities of Scripture and mysteries of Divine secrets are here manifested and made clear by the opening of the side of *Christ* ; and therefore worthily was the veil of the temple rent in sunder at His death, to the end that the hidden secrets which

were in the Divine Scriptures might appear. And thus is manifested the third *Hierarchy*. Wherefore, from all these things it is most evident how that, not only the Ecclesiastical, but also the Angelical *Hierarchy*, doth shine in the *Passion* of our Lord. And as it is the property of *Angels* to purge, illuminate, and make perfect, even so is all this to be found a great deal more plainly in the *Passion* of *Christ*.

4. By these conformities, then, which the *Passion* of *Christ* hath with the *Orders* of *Angels* it was most necessary and fitting to order and dispose the same thus conveniently, not only for the redemption of man, but also for the reparation of the fall of *Angels*. For by reason of the excessive *charity* which was most resplendent in the Cross, the fire of love towards God and our neighbour was kindled in the hearts of men, and so they were *then* made, and are *now* likewise made, apt for the supereminent *Order* of *Seraphim*. Men are also enlightened by the *truth* expressed in this most blessed *Passion*, contemplating the same for the knowledge of the Divine verity, and therefore they are apt for the knowledge and restoration of *Cherubim*. And by great humility, reverence, and worship towards the Majesty of God which was in that *Passion* men are provoked, so far as they can attain thereunto, to the like humility, worship, reverence, and honour, and so are made apt for the reparation of *Thrones*.

By the example also of that most excellent

and Divine *Domination* and rule acquired by the *Passion*, concerning which it is said before, *for which cause God hath also exalted Him* (Phil. ii. 9), men are induced to strive all they can to *domineer*, and get the mastery over their vices and concupiscences by macerations and corporal afflictions, and to subdue unto themselves every appetite of the mind, to the end that nothing vain, idle, nor exorbitant do presume to bear sway in the reason of man, but that all such appetites do bow the knee and yield obedience to the right judgment of reason, and so be made apt for the reparation of the *Order of Dominations*.

And, that I may pass over all briefly, you may run through all the other *Orders* and the perfections of them, according to that which hath been said before—namely, by resisting of the temptations and deceits of the devil, you may make yourself capable of attaining unto the *Powers*; by good works and well living, to *Virtues*; by a diligent and careful ruling of all your senses and interior motions, and also other men's (if they do belong unto you), to *Principalities*; by relieving the necessities and wants of our neighbour, to *Archangels*; by preaching and teaching, to *Angels*. Or, if you will say that it is the office of *Archangels* to teach greater things, and of the *Angels* lesser; so in like manner order and dispose of *Doctors* to *Archangels*, and *Preachers* to *Angels*; and refer all these to the *Passion* of *Christ*, as hath been said of the *Seraphim* and others.

You may also consider another reason that is briefer, why the *Passion* of *Christ* was apt for the reparation of *Angels*—namely, because, as they fell by the highest presumption and pride that might be, even so, by the lowest humiliation and debasement of *Christ* crucified, true God and man, the aforesaid Orders ought to be repaired and filled with men such as are vile and contemptible in their own eyes, and humble ; so that what is before particular for the restoration of the *Thrones*, we may take and apply for the restoring of all other *Orders* in general.

5. And by these selfsame reasons by which we see how the perfection and beauty of *Angels* doth shine in *Christ* crucified, we may also see how in the same *Passion* doth shine the glory of all the *blessed*, because the manifest *vision* of the supernal country is correspondent to that *clear verity* which is in the most blessed *Passion* (as hath been said before), as touching the knowledge of the reasonable part of the soul. To that most profound *humility* and reverence, whereby the *Passion* of our Lord was said before to be a *Throne*, is correspondent a firm *intention*, as touching the irascible part ; for it is said : *Upon whom shall My Spirit rest, but upon the humble ?* (Isa. lxvi. 2). To that superexcellent *charity*, also, of the *Passion* of our Lord is correspondent *love* truly consummated in heaven, as concerning the concupiscible. To that *Domination*, of which it is said, *For which God hath exalted him*

(Phil. ii. 9), most prompt and swift *agility* doth answer ; because *power* is subject to Him whereby He can do whatsoever He will. To that *resistance* of power, by which He destroyed death by death, *impassibility* doth answer. To that force and *virtue* by which He, being lifted up from the earth, drew all things to Himself, *subtility* doth answer, as the penetrative virtue. To that *clarity* and nobility of *principality*, of which it is said, *The principality is upon His shoulder* (Isa. ix. 6), of which *clarity* that place also may be understood, *Father, clarify me* (John xvii. 5), the gift of *clarity* doth answer. To the office also of *Archangels* and *Angels*, which is well represented in the *Passion* (as hath been shown), the beauty and comeliness of the *laurel crown*, due unto doctors and preachers, doth answer in blessed men.

And so it is manifest how in this blessed *Passion*, as in a most bright and clear mirror, all plenitude of *grace* and glory doth appear—of *grace*, I say, as touching the substantial reward, as the gift of the soul ; of *glory*, as touching the *consubstantial* reward, as the gift of the body ; and as touching the *accidental* reward, as the beauty of the laurel crown given to preachers, or to doctors, martyrs, and virgins ; for He taught in the chair of the holy Cross : He was the chief of all martyrs ; and being the Virgin of all Virgins, He commended a Virgin to a Virgin.

6. And the plenitude of *grace* and *glory* of the

Saints doth not only shine in this most glorious *Passion*, but is worthily derived from thence. And that we may speak more aptly by the opening of His side, He imparts to His Saints a clear and manifest *vision* ; by the nailing of His hands and feet, a firm *intention* ; by His tasting of vinegar and gall, the *inebriation of love* ; and this was the thing that made Him thirst. By the binding of His precious members He obtained *agility* for us ; by His mockings and spittings, *clarity* as of the sun ; by His shutting in the sepulchre, *subtility* ; by His crown of thorns, not only a little sprig of laurel, but also the beauty and honour of a most triumphant crown for these three sorts of Saints—Virgins, Martyrs, and Doctors.

And to conclude : I do believe that in this most blessed *Passion* there is matter of most excellent glory and immense joy, as well for Angels as Saints. And I also firmly believe, without any doubting, that as well Angels as Saints do wholly bend themselves for God, and do most intimately with all their hearts love Him, insomuch as, without comparison, they do a great deal more love God than themselves ; yea, I do think that they do not love themselves at all but for God, and therefore they do incomparably more rejoice for the honour and magnificence of God than for their own glory. For since in the *Passion of Christ* there is a most excellent and evident manifestation of the sovereign power, wisdom, and

clemency of God (as hereafter I shall more fully declare), therefore is it that the said *Passion* is to them matter of exceeding great joy and gladness. Whence it comes to pass that, although men rejoice, seeing themselves by that *Passion* to be redeemed ; and the Angels also, seeing themselves thereby to be repaired, and so after a certain manner they reflect upon themselves—although, I say, they always see *this*, yet it is with referring all unto God ; and I do believe that, without comparison, they do most of all rejoice, and are most fully transported into God, whenas they consider in the same *Passion* the infinite power, wisdom, and clemency of their God. Wherefore, as there appeareth here an immense and most noble diffusion of the Divine goodness, even so I believe that in the same there is a most excellent, full, and intimate diffusion of the soul in God through the abundance of joy and gladness.

So, then, it manifestly appears that the *Passion* of *Christ* is the fountain of *grace* and *glory* ; and that there is found *therein* the beauty and perfection as well of the terrestrial *Hierarchy* in the Church as of the celestial in the court of heaven.

CHAPTER X

THAT IN THE PASSION OF CHRIST DOTH SHINE—

1. The greatest power, wisdom, and clemency.
2. Certain motives hereunto.

Now, by the grace of God, it remains to see how the supercelestial Hierarchy, which is God, doth shine in the Cross, to the end we may in some sort know how that the greatest power, wisdom, and clemency of God are also resplendent therein. But because it is great arrogancy and presumption for me that is weak to speak of power ; for a fool, of wisdom ; and one that is wicked, of goodness ; therefore I may not venture upon profound subtilities, nor presume to search out things that are beyond my strength. Yet, notwithstanding, for the more facile understanding of the aforesaid things, and for our consolation, we will handle some ordinary and common things.

1. There is manifested in that most blessed *Passion* the power and good-will of God, in *suffering, freeing, gratifying, justifying, rising, and in magnifying*. I say, first of all, there is manifested in this most blessed *Passion* His fortitude and clemency in *suffering* ; forasmuch as He, Who is God of all, conserving all things that without His hand would turn to nothing, patiently endures to be driven from place to place that is everywhere ; to be bound, that is

immense and incomprehensible ; to be scourged, that is glorious ; to be buffeted, that created the whole world ; to be spit upon, that was eternal beauty, and a mirror without spot or stain ; to be blasphemed, that was the Father of immense goodness ; to be judged, that was the Judge of infinite power ; to be crucified, that was the Lord of absolute liberty ; to be fed with vinegar and gall, that was the fountain of all delicious sweetness. That the joy of Angels should be afflicted ; the life of the living, killed ; the crown of glory, crowned with thorns ; the Lamb of immense clemency and meekness, to have His side opened ; and the Sun of Justice, to be buried in a sepulchre of stone. Patiently to endure all these things, *of* most wicked man, *for* man, and in the midst of all to pray *for* him, was a work of most infinite power, fortitude, goodness, and clemency. So, then, appears the power and goodness of God in *suffering*.

It was a sign also of His immense goodness and power in *freeing* and delivering ; for, that *Christ* being crucified, should bind the most potent ; by dying, should destroy and kill death ; and being buried, should rob and spoil hell, was a sign of immense power. It was likewise a sign of His immense and excessive clemency that, for the delivering of His most wicked enemies from death, He should vouchsafe to die *Himself*. And this is a thing which cannot possibly be conceived, that *by* the death which He suffered He

should free *from* death those that put Him to death ; whereas, according to all human judgment, He ought, rather, for the same offence to have adjudged us all to eternal death and condemnation, even because He was put to so vile and cruel a death *of us* and *for us*. And I do verily believe that the very Angels of Paradise were not able to comprehend in their imaginations the greatness of this mercy before it was revealed unto them.

It was also a sign of His immense power and goodwill in *justifying*. For, if it be a greater matter to justify a wicked person than to create heaven and earth, by reason of the resistance of the will, how great clemency and power was it, then, to save and justify the wicked, not only perpetrating the greatest abominations and impieties, but also killing their very Saviour and Justifier Himself ? And therefore it was a token of most immense clemency that by the effect of so great an impiety He would justify and free us from all sin and impiety, whenas, according to human judgment, He ought, if we had had never another fault in the world, to have forsaken us utterly, and turned us into nothing (both which are all one ; because if He had once left us, we could not choose but we must needs have been resolved into nothing), or to have ordained and disposed *that* wickedness of ours to be, not for our justification, but for our eternal condemnation. In this, then, appeared the passing great

power and clemency of *Christ*, in that He *justified us* by the merit of His *Passion*, which was procured unto Him by our extreme wickedness. These things, so strange and wonderful, are with all diligence to be meditated on, and most worthy of all admiration ; in the consideration of which all human reason and understanding comes short, and the affection is not a little enkindled.

Here did also appear exceeding great power in *rising* ; for it is most certain that to rise from the dead, and to raise one's self especially, or others, is a work of infinite power, both which are *here* in this Resurrection ; for He raised Himself, and also together with Himself many others, which came into the holy city and appeared to many (Matt. xxvii. 53).

It was also His immense clemency in that He would not rise presently after His death, but that He would, for *us* and for the confirmation of our faith, defer a while, and remain a certain time in death, to the end we might more fully and firmly believe Him to have been true man. Neither did He prolong His resurrection overlong, to the end we might believe Him to be true God ; and He raised others, that they might bear testimony and witness of His resurrection ; and for the space of forty days He appeared and manifested Himself, by many arguments and signs, to the end we might believe in Him. He delayed, also, to ascend into heaven, where He procured and wrought our salvation with all

familiarity and most fervent charity. For He thought it not enough to remain among us mortal and passible, but also, being glorious and immortal, for forty days He most manifestly appeared to His Apostles, and instructed them concerning the kingdom of God.

O extreme love, how strictly hast thou bound our God and Lord *Jesus unto us*, Whom it seems impossible to separate *from us* ; for He vouchsafes, with exceeding great carefulness, to unite unto Himself, by faith and love, *us* that are most vile and filthy corruption.

There was also here manifested great power in *magnifying*, for He was magnified in the sight of kings and princes, who in the sight of God were always great. And that thing—namely, to magnify *Christ* crucified in the sight of men, and extol Him above all—was a work of infinite power. Why so ? Because it was against the wisdom of the *Gentiles*, the scandal of the *Jews*, the idolatry of the *Romans*, the cruelty of *tyrants*, and against all the wiles and deceits of the *devil*. It was also above all sense and reason—namely, to believe a man that was crucified to be God.

It was likewise a work of exceeding great clemency to make *us* believe Him—yea, to believe Him to be God, maugre all our hardness and wickedness, by drawing us unto Himself by His inward virtue. And therefore we ought to render Him great thanks, because this was *not from him that ran, nor from him that willed, but from*

God, that showed mercy (Rom. ix. 16). For what have we done for Him that we should be made to believe in Him more than others ? Let us therefore faithfully, and with all fear and love, serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, and let us heartily rejoice in Him, because His wonderful and joyful light hath shined upon us, most unworthy wretches ; and His most pleasant, sweet, and delightsome brightness inwardly enlightens our minds, and turns our darkness into light ; He lifts us up *unto* Him, conjoins and deifies us *with* Him, and resolves us *into* Him.

From hence, therefore, it manifestly appears that the great *power* and *clemency* of God shines in the *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

Now it remains to see how His great wisdom shines therein ; and although we are not able, neither do we know how to speak of all things that may be spoken concerning the same, yet we will say something for our consolation.

His wisdom appears in this *Passion* in regard to the most fitting and agreeable correspondencies that are in all the mysteries of our redemption from sin ; for as the first woman taken and made of virginal flesh was seduced, so *Christ*, being born of a Virgin, was crucified ; and as *she* took of the forbidden tree and gave to her husband, of whom she was made, so *Christ* voluntarily suffered on the tree of the Cross ; and this His *Passion* He communicated to His Mother, of whom He was born, whose soul the

sword of dolour transpierced. And, verily, I am still ignorant and know not the reason wherefore our Lord *Jesus Christ* would have His most dear Mother to participate in His *Passion*, and be afflicted with Him, with so extreme dolour, whenas *His Passion* alone would have been sufficient for us. But I see that His great clemency and wisdom required this, although we were unworthy thereof.

And as *Eve* was seduced in desiring to be as God, even so was *Christ* crucified, Who, notwithstanding He was God, yet He suffered as man ; and as *she* that was the original of our damnation was made out of the side of man, and after she herself had sinned made the man to condescend unto her, even so *Christ* opened His side, from whence the virtue of the Sacraments did spring, and by His blood reconciled us to God His Father ; and as *she* saw the tree which was fair to behold and sweet to eat, even so was *Christ* spit upon in His face, and tasted the bitterness of gall ; and as *her* feet did carry her to the tree, and *her* hands were stretched out to reach the fruit, even so were the hands and feet of *Christ* nailed to the Cross. *She* was proud and ambitious, *He* was humble ; *she* was disobedient, *He* most obedient, even to death. Against *their* longing after knowledge the wisdom of God is condemned. They were *both* naked when they had sinned, and so *Christ* was naked when He was crucified ; *they* after their sin hid themselves

from the face of God, and so *Christ* our Lord God after His death hid Himself in the sepulchre from the face of men. *They* went down into the plain to labour, *Christ* descended into hell, to spoil and rob the same. So that it evidently appears how in this most glorious *Passion* the great wisdom of God is manifested.

And in all these not only the wisdom of God, but also His great *clemency* and favour to man is demonstrated, in that He would, for the eating of *that* tree, ascend the tree of the Cross ; and for *their* hands, that were stretched out to take the fruit, He would have *His* hands stretched out upon the Cross ; and so forth, as is said before ; for this was the work of His immense and ineffable clemency. And I do not think that so great favour and mercy can be comprehended by any creature, but I believe that in thinking thereof the Angels and Saints themselves are truly ravished and wholly absorbed of the immensity of that love and mercy, as a fish is in the sea, though this be not a very perfect similitude.

2. Let us, then, most dear brethren, lift up our hearts in the consideration of these high and mysterious things, and let us be wholly engulfed in the depth of God's immense bounty. Let us go with confidence to the side of *Christ* and enter therein. Let us go, most dear brethren—let us go and die with Him ; let us go, I pray you ; let us go, I say, for His arms are stretched out ready to embrace us.

O good *Jesus*, what hast Thou done ? Why hast Thou loved us so dearly ? Wherefore, O Lord ? Wherefore ? Wherefore, O Lord *Jesus* ? What am I ? Alas ! *I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof* (Matt. viii. 8). How much more unworthy that Thou shouldst die for *my sins* ! but say the word only, and my soul shall be healed. Wherefore, for the healing of my soul, wouldst Thou breathe forth *Thine own* ? Thy word, O Lord, thy *word* had been sufficient. Wherefore, then, wouldst Thou shed Thy *blood*, and that by so ignominious and cruel a death ? Thou createdst the Angels, the heavens, and this *great* world by thy *word* only ; why, then, wouldst Thou endure so many and so great torments—yea, and die so hard and cruel a death, to redeem me, a *little* world, and a most wicked servant ?

O most dear brethren, let, I beseech you, the voice of our Lord *Jesus Christ* sound in your ears—yea, in the most inward part of your hearts, saying : *Consider and see if there were ever sorrow like My sorrow* (Lam. i. 12). Let those sorrows, dearly beloved, penetrate our very bowels, and let our hearts be wounded with them. Let us approach near unto His side, and suck the blood thereof, for this is well pleasing unto Him. Let us not suffer Him to endure so much for us in vain, nor permit this His most precious blood to run down upon the earth, and be spilt, but let our hearts be the receptacles

and vessels thereof; and being inebriated with His dolours, let us say : *God forbid that we should rejoice in anything save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified* (Gal. vi. 14); which He grant unto us, that liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XI

THAT IN THE PASSION OF OUR LORD THE HEART
OF MAN IS EXCITED AND INFLAMED TO THE
SEVEN WORKS OF MERCY—

1. By alluring.

2. By directing.

SEEING, according to that which hath been already said, our *contemplation* in the *Passion* of our Lord *Jesus Christ* may diversely be regulated and performed, now it remains in some sort to see how we may be excited and directed in the same in matters of *action*; and because, among other works of the *active life*, the works of *mercy* and piety are, above all others, commended unto us in Holy Scripture; and because I have sufficiently spoken before concerning that action which belongs to true affliction and contempt of a man's self, therefore at this present, omitting all others, let us see how in the *Passion* of our Lord there is an excitation, inflammation, pattern, and mirror of those works of *mercy* concerning which our Lord in *St. Matthew* (chapter xxv.)

says He will make His judgment at the latter day, and for which He will render an eternal reward, saying : *Come, ye blessed of My Father, etc. ; for I was hungry, etc.*

1. Let us therefore, most dear brethren, wipe away all darkness from the eyes of our heart, and let us with heed and diligence behold this most blessed *Passion*, and we shall clearly see how in the same the aforesaid works of *mercy* do most excellently appear and shine. But, first of all, let us see how we are *allured* and incited to the doing of them, and afterwards we shall see how by the said *Passion* we are *directed* and regulated in them ; for if we did consider how our Lord hungered and thirsted for us we should be much moved to feed them that are hungry and thirsty, that by so doing we may relieve *Christ* in His members. And that we may reduce all to the *Passion* of *Christ*, let us hear Himself crying in the gospel as He hung on the Cross, and saying, *I thirst* (John xix. 28). And if they be *blessed that hunger and thirst after justice* (Matt. v. 6), He being full of all grace and perfection did most of all in this His blessed *Passion* hunger and thirst after our justice, because, when He died, He had not only a spiritual hunger and thirst for *it*, but also, as I do very probably believe, a corporal hunger and thirst too, by reason that the night before He had taken great pains and watched in prayer ; and after that, being much wearied with the anxiety of his apprehending,

scourging, and other pains which He suffered, about the sixth hour—that is to say, at noon—when the appetite is wont to be stirred up and increased, he was nailed to the Cross, and there remained fasting three whole hours, even until the ninth, at which time He cried and said, *I thirst*; thereupon *they gave Him vinegar to drink, which, when He had received, bowing down His head, He gave up the ghost.*

Neither is it credible that at that time He resisted or withstood, by the virtue and force of His Divinity, any necessity or corporal indigence whatsoever (as likewise when He fasted forty days), because He fully and wholly yielded Himself to suffer on the Cross for us; so, then, because our Lord *Jesus Christ* hungered and thirsted for us, we ought hereby to be much moved and incited to feed *Him* in His members.

Our Lord was also a *stranger*, because, the hour of His most blessed *Passion* drawing near, He said: *My kingdom is not of this world* (John xviii. 36). Yea, on the Cross He was a great *stranger*, and reputed an alien for *us*, because *His friends, neighbours, and kinsfolk at that time departed from Him* (Ps. xxxvii. 12); and *He became a stranger and pilgrim, even to His brethren* (Ps. lxviii. 9). Let us therefore, most dear brethren, entertain *Him* in His members, that was a stranger for *us*. Our Lord was likewise *naked* upon the Cross for *us*. Let us therefore, I pray you, clothe *Him* in His members. He also

appeared *there* to be truly *sick* and weak, being full of dolours and torments for *us*. Let us therefore visit *Him* in His members. He was also for *us* apprehended and led as a *captive* to the Cross, hanged and nailed thereon. Let us therefore go to His members that are captives and in prison. So, then, it appears how in the said *Passion* He was as a true object alluring and inciting us, to the doing of the aforesaid works of *mercy* unto His members.

2. Now let us see how in His *Passion* he was also a *moving and directing example* in the aforesaid works, for He Himself exercised the same works ; for He opened His side, and shed His blood, to give *drink to the thirsty*. He roasted His flesh on the altar of the Cross with an excessive heat of charity, to *feed the hungry*. And to the same purpose, at His Last Supper, He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar to recreate and refresh us, which Sacrament is a memorial of our Lord's *Passion* ; *for His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed*, as He Himself doth testify (John vi. 56). If, then, our Lord *Jesus Christ* did make meat and drink for *us* of His own very Body, how much more ought we to *feed them that be hungry and thirsty*, not only with our superfluities, but also with our necessities ? And if our Lord gave unto *us* His own flesh to be our meat, how much more ought we to give unto *Him* in His members the flesh of our beasts ? And if He gave *us* to eat Himself, Who

was the *living bread that came down from heaven* (John. vi. 51), by how much more ought *we* to give unto *Him* in His members dead bread that came from the earth? If He gave unto *us* spiritual meat—to wit, the Bread of Angels, which unites us to *Him*; and converts us unto *Himself*, how much more ought *we* to give unto *Him* in His members a little wine or milk, which is no better than the nourishment of worms? Let us therefore, most dear brethren, be careful to relieve and maintain the poor of *Christ*—yea, rather, to relieve *Christ Himself* in His poor members.

He also exercised a work of *hospitality* on the Cross, for there was *there* a certain *pilgrim*, that, going a long journey, demanded lodging of Christ, saying: *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom* (Luke xxiii. 42); as if he had said: “Vouchsafe, O Lord *Jesus Christ*, to take notice of *me*, a poor pilgrim, and to give me lodging within the palace of Thy kingdom.” It is a wonderful thing to see the mercy of God: He seems to forget what elsewhere He answered another, that said he would follow Him whithersoever He went: *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head* (Matt. viii. 20). But see what He does. He delays not to receive Him into harbour, and that not in the porch or entry of His house, or in His stable, but in *Himself*; and that not to-morrow, or the next day

after to-morrow, but even *to-day*, saith He, *shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.*

Oh, the miserable wickedness of men ! Our Lord receives a thief *unto* Himself—yea, and *into* Him, too ; and we will not so much as receive good Christians into our earthly *houses*, but we excuse ourselves, and say : Perchance they are thieves. Remember, O miserable man, that our Lord received a thief ; and if *thou* canst not receive him into thy material house because thou art poor, receive him at least into thy *heart* by compassionating of him.

Our Lord *Jesus Christ* stript Himself also of all that He had, and hung *naked* upon the Cross for to cover *our* shame ; how much more ought *we* to unclothe and make bare our own persons to cover Him in His poor ? Or that I may speak of ourselves that are *Religious* : why do we not spare the poor of *Christ* such superfluities as are in our cells and upon our beds ? Oh, how ought we to rejoice when we abridge and disfurnish ourselves for *Christ's* sake, not only of things superfluous, but also necessary, and give them to His poor ? For He was stripped stark *naked* for *me*, and *I* think much to suffer the least want that may be for *Him*. Far be *this*, dear brethren, from every one of us. Let us, therefore, bestow not only our *goods*, but even our own selves on our neighbours—nay, on *Christ* in our neighbour—because He gave *Himself* wholly for *us* ; for He visited us that were sick, and on the Cross He

took upon Him all our infirmities, diseases, dolours, and afflictions. Even so in like manner, dear brethren, let us diligently visit His sick, and let us receive and transform into ourselves by compassion their infirmities ; to the end we may say with the Apostle St. Paul : *Who is infirm among you, and I am not infirm with him ?* (2 Cor. xi. 29).

Our Lord *Jesus Christ* also in the three days before His resurrection, went to *visit the captives* that were in hell. What prison or dungeon can there be in all the world so hideous, loathsome, obscure, or deep, whither we ought not to go and *visit the captives* that be *there*, or, rather, our Lord *Jesus* Himself in them ? For He accounts that wholly to be done to *Himself* whatsoever we do to His members for the love of *Him*.

But of all the *mercies* that were in our Lord, *that* was the most compelling, conserving, and comforting by which He prayed for His persecutors. Even so likewise ought *we*, in this point, to show our pity and mercy towards our neighbours, not only in forgiving *them* that offend us, and bearing good-will towards them, but also in pouring forth most affectionate and heartfelt prayers for them ; which God grant unto us. Amen.

CHAPTER XII

A VERY DEVOUT PRAYER CONCERNING THE
PASSION OF OUR LORD

1. The devout person desires to compassionate Christ.
2. The Passion of Christ is our medicine,
3. To be preferred before all delights ;
4. Most necessary for us ;
5. A convenient colour for all states ;
6. In which we ought chiefly to glory ;
7. From which none ought to withdraw himself.
8. A prayer to Jesus.

1. O LORD *Jesus Christ*, O true Friend, O most loving Husband, *mingle*, I pray Thee, *dirt with thy spittle, and anoint mine eyes therewith* (John ix. 6), that *I*, who am blind, may see Thy wounds. Lead me, Lord *Jesus*, though I am Thy most unworthy servant, into the treasury of Thy true Temple, that I may behold *what* and *how great* a thing Thou offeredst to Thy Father on the Cross for *us* ; and peradventure my soul (although, by reason of her many iniquities, deprived of *Thee*, her true Husband) will offer unto Thee *two mites*. Admit me, though a debauched *prodigal son* as I am, to eat the fatted calf with Thee, roasted on the Cross. O my good and true Master, teach me the treasures of the wisdom of Thy most vile and contemptible death. Vouchsafe, Lord *Jesus*, again and again to open Thy side unto me, Thy most wicked

servant, to the end that *mine eyes*, which have *robbed my soul* (Lam. iii. 51), may find my prey in Thy side. O good *Jesus*, my heart is too stony unless it be mollified with Thy blood ; it is too much distracted unless it be recollected in Thy side. O good Pastor, I am that straying and wandering sheep that was lost, for which Thou layedst down Thy life on the Cross. Behold me, here I am ; acknowledge me, bring me into the sheep-cote of Thy wounds ; and do Thou, Lord *Jesus Christ*, safely keep me in Thy *Passion*. For without Thy death I die ; without Thy wounds I am wounded ; without Thy contempts I am contemned ; and without Thy scourgings I am scourged with the rod, not of equity, but iniquity.

2. But because I have not known how to continue in Thy most vile *Passion*, I am therefore in a manner brought to nothing ; because I have parted with the ignominy of the Cross, I am therefore become full of ignominy, contempt, and disgrace ; because I have *departed* from the foolishness of the Cross, I am therefore become most vain and foolish ; because I have neglected and refused the infirmity of Thy *Passion*, I am therefore most infirm and weak ; because I have rejected the dolours of Thy thorns, I am therefore pricked with the thorns of concupiscence. What shall I say ? Verily, unless my heart be opened with Thy dolours, it will be opened with most enormous and exorbitant vices ; and unless it

hide itself in Thy wounds, it will be spoiled and robbed by thieves that will wound it a great deal worse. For against superfluous and vain glory, avarice, envy, hatred, anger, sloth, gluttony, and luxury, the most perfect medicine—yea, without which there is no other medicine or remedy—is Thy *Passion* ; against *man's* pride, Thy humility ; against *his* vainglory, Thy vileness and contempt ; against *his* avarice, Thy most liberal bounty ; and so of all the rest. It is *that* which fences mine ears, that I hear no vain or evil words ; that shuts mine eyes, lest I behold any deadly or hurtful sights ; that stops my mouth, lest I offend in speaking or tasting ; that stops my nose, lest I transgress in odoriferous and sweet smells ; that fastens my hands to the tree, lest they be stretched out to unlawful touchings, or to the doing of any wicked works ; that nails my feet to the Cross, lest they walk unprofitably or harmfully. It is *that* which nourishes mutual charity, increases inward devotion, and elevates to supernal contemplation.

3. Give me, therefore, O Lord, this Thy most bitter and ignominious *Passion* for my *wife*, and join it unto me by an indivisible and indissoluble bond of marriage. For I have loved *it* above all other women—that is to say, above all temporal delights and consolations—and yet, notwithstanding for all *that*, I have oftentimes divorced her, and entertained another in her place. But behold me *now* ; I return again unto Thee, and

earnestly desire it of Thee. Do not, I pray Thee, deal with me in the rigour of Thy justice, but according to the dispensation of Thy mercy. Give me, therefore, Lord *Jesus*, this Thy *Passion* ; for I have loved it, delighted in it, and desired it with all my heart. *It* alone is sufficient for me ; *it* alone will most plentifully feed and nourish me in this life. The same is it which is my life, my light, my delight, my consolation, and my wisdom ; the same is it which leads me to and fro, backwards and forwards, up and down ; without it I err and stray, without it I swerve from the haven of salvation.

O good *Jesus*, I ask nothing of Thee in this life but that I may be perfectly crucified on the Cross *with* Thee. Certainly, most loving Lord, I will not live, unless I may die with Thee. Give me, therefore, either a temporal death or else imprint Thine own death in my heart. Woe is me ! Wherefore was I born but to embrace my Lord *Jesus* on the Cross, and to rest in His wounds ? I had rather in this present life be crucified *with* Thee than abound in all delights *without* Thee. This Thy most blessed *Passion* I will have ; this I desire, this I long after with all my heart. I renounce and forsake all things—yea, and myself also, for *it*. Let *it* be unto me my soul, my body, and my consolation ; for Thy blood hath inebriated me, and Thy dolours have wounded my heart.

O good *Jesus*, for *me* Thou hast made the

heaven, the sun, the moon, and stars ; the fire, the air, the water, and earth ; the birds and fishes, the beasts and creeping things, the trees and flowers, the heaths and grass ; gold and silver, all metals, all sorts of colours and precious stones. But who desired these at Thy hands ? Thou hast given us all these things of Thine own accord, without our importunity, or so much as any request made by us *unto* Thee for them ; and behold, I afflict my soul all the day long, demanding and begging Thy ignominious death, and I can scarce obtain so much as one small drop of Thee. Thou knowest, Lord *Jesus*, that I account all visible things as vile and of no account in respect of it ; and I will freely give Thee all things that I have back again, if Thou wilt but give me Thy wounds. *These* do elevate my heart above the heavens ; *they* shine and give light to mine understanding above the stars ; *they* inflame my affections above the fire, make my speech to fructify, and become fertile above the air ; *they* mollify my mind more than water ; they make my affections more firm and stable than the earth. These are more profitable to me than all the beasts and fishes ; more sweet than all sorts of fruits ; more pleasant and delightful than the trees and flowers ; more precious than silver, gold, or precious stones ; nay, all these things are but mere vanity, and even just nothing, in comparison of Thy most contemptible *Passion*. This, therefore, Lord *Jesus*, is *it*, that

I will have, which I pray Thee once again to give unto me for my *wife*. I do not demand of Thee the beauty of heaven, but the ignominy of Thy death ; not the delights of the world, but the distresses and afflictions of Thy *Passion*. Make haste, then, Lord *Jesus*, and give me Thy *Passion* quickly, for I will not only be betrothed and made sure to it, but I will also *consummate matrimony* with it. Let *it* give consent unto *me*, for I have given *my* consent to *it* already, and it is now become *matrimony ratified*. Let my heart enter into *Thy* wounds, and let *them* enter into *my* soul, and then it shall be *matrimony consummated*.

4. But who am I, Lord *Jesus*, that I should be so audacious as to ask Thy *Passion* for my *Spouse*, which Thou grantest only to Thy most intimate and dearest friends, as an especial great favour ? But what though I be nothing but vanity itself, and most horrible filthy corruption, yet notwithstanding I presume of Thine infinite mercy. And though I have not the purity and sanctity of Thy Mother, that I may worthily compassionate Thee, yet I have the wickedness of the thief, so as I ought to be crucified at Thy side *with* Thee. I do in this life, Lord *Jesus*, more desire to ascend with the thief the Cross of Thy *Passion* than with *Peter, James, and John* (Matt. xvii. 2) the mountain of Thy *transfiguration*. It is a great deal more pleasant to *me* at this present to see Thee with the eye of my mind

spit upon than transfigured, and howsoever I be not so good as the most excellent *veil in the Temple* (Matt. xxvii. 51) to rend in sunder at Thy death, yet I am as bad as the most fetid monument to open myself at the sight of Thy open side. What dost Thou seek or require in me, most sweet Lord *Jesus*? If at Thy death the rocks were rent, I am harder than any rock. If the earth did shake and tremble, I am more earthy than the very earth. What wickedness or unworthiness, then, is there wanting in *me*, as that I do not stand in need of Thy death? And though I be not of so *heavenly* a constitution as that I deserve with the sun to be obscured by compassionating of Thee, yet, notwithstanding, I am of so *hellish* a constitution as that within the three days of Thy death I ought to be visited by Thee. Let not, then, Lord *Jesus*, my wickedness draw Thee back, but join this most noble Spouse—Thine ignominious death, I mean—inseparably to me, because I am sick with longing for it.

5. For it is the most beautiful of all women—that is to say, it is the most excellent of all graces; in *it* consists the chiefest worship and service of God, the greatest mercy of God, the greatest diffusion and communication of God unto us. By *it* the sovereign wisdom and prudence of God vanquished our proud enemy; by His power He carried the souls from out of hell into heaven; and by His might He appeased—yea, and gratified—God; whose violet colour

the humble and the Confessors do gladly receive ; the whiteness of the lily, the innocent and the virgins do embrace ; and whose rosy red the martyrs fervent in charity do greatly love, because in *it* was the most profound humility, the most innocent virginity, and the most excellent and excessive charity ; whose purple and crimson colour the Angels admire ; whose fragrant, sweet smell the dead feel, and by it are raised ; by whose most delectable touch the weak are strengthened ; by whose most sweet taste the perfect are refreshed and conserved.

Such a one, O ye sons and daughters of *Jerusalem*, is my spouse, my sweetheart, and she that is the desire of my soul ; it is *she* that overcomes mine enemy the devil, weans me from the world, and mortifies and tames my flesh. *God forbid, therefore, that I should rejoice in anything save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world* (Gal. vi. 14).

6. *It is*, O my Lord *Jesus*, great joy unto me that for *me* Thou hast made heaven, the stars, and other inferior creatures ; but I do incomparably far more rejoice for that Thou vouchsafedst for *me* to become man. It is a great joy unto me that Thou hast made me according to Thy image and likeness ; but it is a great deal more joy that, taking upon Thee for my sake (Phil. ii. 7) the form of a servant, Thou wast made like *unto* me. It is great joy *unto* me, for

that Thou dost *govern me* (Ps. xxii. 1) and nourish me with so many benefits ; but it is far greater that Thou wast hungry, thirsty, and being weary didst sit upon the well (John iv. 6), and enduredst so many discommodities for *me*. It is a great joy *unto me* that Thou hast made all creatures subject *to me* ; but it is far greater that for *me* Thou didst subject Thyself, who wast the Lord of all, to a young girl and a poor, simple carpenter. It is a great joy *unto me* that, if I be Thy friend, Thou wilt honour me in heaven ; but it is far greater that for *me*, Thy most wicked enemy, Thou wast reviled, spit upon, and divers ways mocked and abused here on earth. It is a great joy *unto me* that, if I be good, Thou wilt enrich me in Thy kingdom ; but it is far greater that for *me*, a sinner, Thou wast in extreme poverty upon the Cross : because, as concerning Thy taste, when Thou wast adry, Thou hadst gall and vinegar given Thee to drink ; as concerning raiment, Thou didst hang all naked ; as concerning a house to dwell in, Thou hadst not so much as a place to lay Thy head. It is a great joy *unto me* that, if I persevere in grace unto the end, Thou wilt fill me with the pleasure of all the delights of Paradise ; but it is far greater that for *me*, Thy contemner, and one full of all abominable filth and corruption, Thou wast filled with all manner of distresses, dolours, and afflictions, and condemned to die a most shameful death on Mount *Calvary*. It is a great joy *unto me* that,

if I live an angelical life here on earth, Thou wilt associate me with Thine Angels in heaven ; but it is far greater that for *me*, leading a diabolical life, Thou wast crucified with thieves upon earth, associated and reckoned with wicked sinners. Wherein ought I, then, to rejoice, but in the great honour of my God, and in His great love and favour towards me ? which things are fully and perfectly found in the Cross. *Far be it, therefore, from me to rejoice in anything save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal. vi. 14). For if it be true that *precious in the sight of our Lord is the death of His Saints* (Ps. cxv. 15), because they suffer and die for Him, how much more glorious, then, in our sight ought the death of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to be, because He suffered and died for *us* ! It behoves us, therefore, to rejoice in the Cross of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

7. But, alas, alas ! I hear *Jesus* crying now again and saying : *Thou hast put Mine acquaintance far from Me, and they have made Me an abomination to them. Thou hast put My friend and My neighbour and My acquaintance far from My misery. They that see Me fly away from Me, and there is none that seeks after My life. I am made a stranger to My brethren and an alien to My mother's sons. I looked for some that should have been sorry with Me, and there was none that should have comforted Me, and I found them not* (Ps. lxxxvii. 9 and 19 ; cxli. 5 ; lxviii. 9 and 21). Do not, therefore, most dear brethren—do

not fly away ; do not leave *Jesus* crucified alone in the midst of thieves. Return back, I pray you, and let us go and die with Him. But all fly away : only the Mother of our Lord remains with Him. Let us go with *John*, and accompany our Blessed Lady, and stand near the Cross with her. For if *Mary Cleophas* and *Mary Magdalene* accompanied the Virgin *Mary* His Mother, well may we accompany the Mother and the Disciple ; which if we do, I verily believe it will be said to us, as it was unto *John* : *Behold your Mother* (meaning our Blessed Lady), and it will be said to her : *Behold your children* (John xix. 26). Let us, then, dearly beloved, remain with the Mother if we will gain the Mother with the Son, for the one cannot be obtained without the other. Let us, with them, *get up into the palm-tree and pluck the fruits thereof* (Cant. vii. 8), for *there* doth the heart of the Virgin hang with her Son. Let none make any excuse in what state soever he be, because there is none that in this tree cannot find most pleasant fruit and sufficient nourishment ; for if you be a *sinner*, consider that most bitter and ignominious *Passion* to detest and abhor sin, because He died for our sins. If you be an *incipient* or a penitent, consider the *Passion* for an example of penance and for to make satisfaction for your sins. If you be a *proficient*, consider the *Passion* for the searching and finding out the effect thereof, in which a Christian may make great profit. If you

be *perfect*, consider the *Passion*, for to compassionate *Christ* and His Mother, and for the transforming yourself wholly into the said *Passion*. If you be *consummated* in justice, consider the same for the loving of God and admiring His mercy towards us. Let not any, therefore, excuse themselves, for *here* they may find food, lodging, dwelling, and their centre to rest in for ever. Embrace, then, O ye five states of the world, with an earnest and longing desire, the five wounds of our Lord, and make them the continual care and thought of your heart ; which *Jesus Christ* crucified grant unto us, Who is blessed for ever. Amen.

A PRAYER TO OUR LORD JESUS (COMMONLY SAID
BY DEVOUT PERSONS AFTER COMMUNION)

8. Transpierce, O most sweet Lord *Jesus*, the marrow of my soul, with the most sweet and wholesome wound of Thy love. Wound the entrails of my soul with true, fraternal, and apostolic charity, to the end that my soul may truly languish, burn, and melt away with the sole love and desire of Thee. *O let my soul long and faint for to dwell in Thy courts : let it covet to be dissolved, and to be with Thee* (Ps. lxxxiii. 1). Grant that my soul may hunger after Thee alone, the Bread of Angels, the repast of holy souls, our daily and supersubstantial bread, the Bread of Life that camest down from heaven, con-

taining in Thee all relish, sweetness, and pleasant delight for to recreate the taste. Let my heart always hunger after Thee and feed upon Thee, upon whom the Angels desire to look ; and let the bowels of my soul be replenished with the abundant sweetness of Thy excessive love. Let it ever thirst after Thee, the fountain of living water, the fountain of everlasting life, the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, the fountain of eternal light, the torrent of most fluent pleasure, and the inexhaustible plenty of the house of God. Let my heart always desire Thee and long after Thee. Let it seek Thee, find Thee, tend to Thee, attain unto Thee. Let it meditate and speak of Thee, and do all things to the praise and glory of Thy most sweet name, with all humility and discretion, with love and delectation, with facility and affection, with peace and patience, with all longanimity and perseverance, even unto the end. And be Thou always my only hope, my trust, my riches, my delight, my pleasure, my joy, my rest, my peace, my sweetness, my odour, my pleasantness, my refection, my love, my meditation, my strength, my expectation, my refuge, my aid, my sustentation, my counsel, my patience, my wisdom, my protection, my answer, my speech, my meditation, my operation, my portion, my possession, my inheritance, and my treasure, in Whom alone let my mind, heart, and hope be immovably fixed and detained for ever. Amen.

The Second Book

CHAPTER I

HOW A MAN MAY MAKE HIS DAILY PROGRESS, AND
MORE AND MORE PLEASE GOD — ELEVEN
DEVICES

1. To despise one's self.
2. To be sorry for nothing but sin.
3. To love poverty.
4. To deny one's proper will.
5. To despise nobody.
6. To judge nobody.
7. To repute the good of his neighbour to be his own.
8. To love God alone
9. To behold God in all things.
10. To recount the benefits of God.
11. To be devoted to our Blessed Lady.

To the end that a man may make his daily progress and more and more please God, let him endeavour to have in him these eleven things that follow :

1. Let him repute himself the vilest and worst of all others, and altogether unworthy of the very least of God's benefits ; let him be displeasing to himself and only desire to please

God ; and let him also be willing to be reputed vile and base of others. And so from hence let him consider and gather the great clemency of God towards him, that, notwithstanding he be most filthy, in all things most disloyal, and most prone to offend the immense majesty of God, yet, for all that, God vouchsafes to entertain him for His servant—yea, and (which is a great deal more) to adopt him for His son. Do not esteem it a great matter that you serve God, but, rather, esteem it a very great matter that He deigns to have so unable and so miserable a servant as you are to serve Him.

2. That he be sorry for no other thing than for sin, or that which *draws* to sin or *withdraws* from good—yea, let him be glad for every tribulation, injury, and affliction that falls upon him, and let him most heartily love such as wrong him, very particularly and specially praying for them. Let him take occasion from thence to praise God, and let him acknowledge himself unable sufficiently to thank Him for so great a benefit, because whom God loves He corrects and chastises ; and tribulations compel us, whether we will or no, to go unto God.

3. That he love poverty and all penury and want for *Christ's* sake, not seeking or any way desiring temporal things, but merely for the serving of his necessity ; but let him endeavour to conform himself unto *Christ* his Head in poverty and renouncing of all corporal

consolations. And this He ought to esteem as a great favour that *Christ*, the King of kings and Lord of lords, vouchsafes to clothe so vile a servant with his own habiliments, and to assimilate most filthy dirt unto himself. Therefore, by how much more the richer he sees himself to be, and to abound in the consolations and delights of the body, by so much the more grievously he ought to lament and be sorry, seeing himself to be far off from the likeness and conformity of *Christ*.

4. That in such things as are good and indifferent he study to do another body's will rather than his own—yea, that in outward actions he ever study wholly to deny his own will, affecting with all diligence in things lawful to satisfy the will and pleasure of others. And if he ought to do thus towards *all*, then ought he more specially to obey the will of his *superiors*, and with all his might and main embrace all such things as are honest which they shall desire and command to be done. If, therefore, they shall intimate any such things to be done, he ought, according to his power, with great goodwill and desire, to accomplish the same.

5. That he despise no person whatsoever, though never so miserable or contemptible, but, rather, that he be moved with a motherly affection towards all, and so intimately compassionate all, as a mother doth her only and most dearly beloved son, reputing all *their*

miseries to be his own ; and that he relieve and help everyone (if possibly he can) as himself ; and howsoever, in compassionating and ministering to the necessities of all, he ought to bear the affection of a mother, yet he ought to reverence them as fathers and masters.

6. That he condemn none of sin, seeing he knows not what the grace of God can work in the soul of man. But if by outward manifest signs he find any to be a sinner, let him be more sorry for his sins than for a thousand wounds inflicted on his own body. Let him consider that the soul thus wounded with sin is more precious than all the bodies of the world—namely, as well of men as of the heavens, so far as they are bodies. And, therefore, as I would preserve and love mine own body, even so—nay, a great deal more—ought I, with all care and diligence, to preserve my neighbour, and keep him from sinning, by my prayers, good advice, and example.

7. That he love the good of his neighbour as his own ; and as a mother takes delight and pleasure in the good of her son, so ought he to rejoice in the goods of all men living, but especially in such goods as are spiritual, or inducing and tending to spiritual. And he ought also to procure the good of others as his own, and, being procured, he ought carefully to conserve and further the same ; and he ought always to conceive and believe better things of

his neighbour than he sees with his eyes. He ought likewise to rejoice much for the temporal goods of his neighbour, especially if he see him to use them well.

8. That he love nothing besides God, but purely *for* God, that in all things God only may sincerely be loved, without a companion. Neither let the sanctity, though never so great, of any person whatsoever allure him, nor the greatness of benefits. Neither let him love any with a singular and special love, bearing affection more to one than to another, but let him love all alike, with a general and common love, that so, referring his loving of all unto God, he ever love them best that are best. Yet, notwithstanding he may requite one good turn with another, and after a special manner, pray for his benefactors and kindred, and chiefly for his parents, for the saving of their souls.

9. Whatsoever he do, and about what affairs soever he be busied, that he always have God actually in his heart, and that in all things he actually or habitually intend no other thing than His honour, ever aiming principally at it; and that he always so have in his mind the presence of God, as if he saw before his eyes Him that is present in every place, in His substance and essence, fearing, reverencing, and, as much as possibly he can, loving Him and enjoying Him, so far as he can here in this life, and resting in Him and in no other.

10. If he can obtain the aforesaid things, that he acknowledge them to be great benefits of God. Yet he ought also, as well as he can, to call to mind the other innumerable benefits of God, especially the creation of him according to His own image and likeness, and the taking upon Him his nature, and delivering Himself to death for him, giving Himself here in this life to be his food and in the other his reward. And because he cannot in this life obtain Him for his reward, let him, therefore, look upon Him hanging on the Cross, and so compassionate Him as if he suffered all His wounds in his own heart. And he ought to be sorry principally because he sees so many to be deprived of so exceeding great a benefit. And, last of all, let him look upon Him on the Altar, exhibited to him for his meat and drink, having in Him the taste of all delicious sweetness ; and being most affectionately delighted in him, let him cry and say : “ Lord *Jesus Christ*, who’ art the Bread of Life, vouchsafe to satiate me with Thee, that I may hunger after nothing but Thee : be pleased so to inebriate me with Thee, as that I may thirst after nothing but Thee, keeping mind, O Lord, lest the shadow of the earth and earthly things come between and separate me from the light of Thee, Who art the true Sun of Justice.”

11. Let him yield all possible reverence and devotion to the Mother of Christ, and say : “ O most loving Lord *Jesus*, vouchsafe that I, a

poor miserable sinner, may honour and reverence thy Mother as I ought. And do Thou, O most courteous Lady, obtain for me that I may always be devoted to His and thy service, and that with a pure mind, both in heart and body, I may continually attend upon Thy goodness. Amen."

CHAPTER II

THE WONDERFUL LOVE OF GOD FOR MAN

1. How a man ought to incite himself to the love of God, and, as much as he can, inflame his heart with the consideration of God's benefits.

2. God gives Himself freely and wholly to us, and therefore we ought to give ourselves to Him.

3. The greatest sign of God's love is Christ's incarnation and birth.

4. His life and Passion.

5. His descending into hell and resurrection.

6. The institution of the Blessed Sacrament.

I. BECAUSE the heart of the contemplative person ought never to leave seeking how it may more and more be inflamed in the love of his Creator, I have therefore, according to my slender power, laboured to set down some certain motives and inducements hereunto.

First of all, think with thyself, O man, that there is nothing so forcible to inflame thee in the love of God as the remembrance of His infinite

benefits. For when thou considerest His great liberality in bestowing upon thee such inestimable and ineffable benefits, thou art hereby compelled to think that thou art bound to love Him, because there is nothing that doth more incite a man to love than to be loved. For this do men, though never so savage and cruel, who love *such* as love *them*, though by the instigation of the old Serpent they neglect to do it to their Creator. Think of what thou wilt, and thou shalt from thence gather no small matter and occasion of loving thy Creator. Thou oughtest not feignedly but truly to consider that thou standest in the presence of thy Lord, for He is where thou art, even just so as He is in the empyreal heaven; and think that thou art His, and not thine own, and then doubt not, but whatsoever thou shalt demand of Him belonging to thy salvation, and that shall not be any way for thy hurt, thou shalt obtain it. Certainly all these are mighty incentives of love. How is it possible that thou canst not love Him, Whose thou art, and Who is ready to give thee all things? Dost thou not love *him* that gives thee but any one thing? How much more, then, oughtest thou to love *Him* that gives thee *all* things—nay, that gives thee Himself? And if thou lovest thyself, why dost thou not much more love Him that made thee? Thou hast destroyed thyself, and every day by sin dost destroy thyself, and yet, notwithstanding, thou lovest thyself, but Him that made, redeemed, and

still conserves thee, thou lovest not. Say, then, to our Lord: "Lord, I am Thy creature, and therefore Thou canst not deny me Thyself."

But before thou goest any further, meditate upon these things that I have said, and be inflamed with love. And who can withhold himself, but that, forgetting all things, he presently cast himself *wholly* unto God (and not by parts or piecemeals), when he considers that his Lord God, the chiefest good, the delight of Angels, the reward of the blessed, is not able to deny Himself to weak and corruptible man, whose misery none can sufficiently express? And though he be most weak, miserable, and sinful, yet if he convert himself unto Him, he shall not fail to obtain Him. And this He desires us to ask, and we shall receive it, as He Himself hath promised, saying: *Ask, and it shall be given you* (Matt. vii. 7). Verily, I know no reason why we should labour for any more, or afflict ourselves daily about stark nothing, when we may possess (if we will) the Creator of all things. Why, then, do we labour and seek for anything else? For if I can so easily have all good, why should I strive to possess things that are full of all miseries?

2. O Lord my God, what do we else but wrong Thee, for Thy love in giving Thyself so willingly to us? If we enjoy Thee, Thou receivest no benefit at all thereby, and yet Thou lovest us so dearly as that Thou sayest it is a great *delight* unto Thee to be with us (Prov. viii. 31). Why

dost Thou love us so much as that Thou art more willing to give us Thine own self than anything else we can demand? Certainly from henceforward I will possess no other thing, seeing I can with such easy asking obtain my God, Who is everything. I will therefore adorn and deck myself with jewels, and bring Him into the chamber of my heart, and there I will take my rest with Him for ever. I know full well that He desires and seeks for nothing else but to visit my soul, desiring, after He hath knocked so long, to enter in. Wherefore I am sorry that I have all this while wanted so great a good, and therefore I will say unto Him: "I know that Thou lovest me more than I do myself; I will, therefore, never hereafter take any more care for myself, but I will be careful to do that only which may please *Thee*, and do Thou from henceforward take care and charge of *me*. I cannot be intentive to *me* and to *Thee* too: do Thou, therefore, by way of counterchange, be intentive to *me* and my misery, to help me, and I will be intentive to *Thee* and Thy mercy, to be delighted *in* Thee. And although I shall greatly gain by *Thee*, but Thou nothing at all by *me*, yet notwithstanding I know that Thou art a great deal more willingly with *me*, preserving me and furthering me in all good, than I with *Thee*, that I may enjoy Thy goodness. From whence proceeds this? Certainly from no other cause but because I hate myself and Thou lovest me."

But if, O Lord, I should run through all the signs and tokens of Thy love, I should faint and fail of my purpose, for if I spake with the tongues of men and Angels I could not express the goods of Nature, of fortune, grace, and glory. And, therefore, passing over all these in silence, I will O eternal Father, remember nothing but Thy Son.

3. Oh, how great is Thy love, O God, to man, whom Thou hast so exceedingly loved, as that Thou wouldst have man to become God, and God to become man ! What shall I say of the weaker sex, of which Thou wouldst have the Son to be born, and He that was Thine only-begotten and Thy true and proper Son, would be made and termed the Son of a Virgin ! Truly Thou, O God, hast exceedingly exalted mankind, even in both sexes, in that Thou wouldst have Thy Son, that was equal to Thee, to become man and the Son of a woman. Thou wouldst not show this demonstration of love towards the Angels : *For He took not upon Him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham*, said the Apostle (Heb. ii. 16).

Surely it is a most wonderful thing how that the hearts of the sons of men do not rend and break in sunder with this love ! What else hath God to do with us when we sin but to cast us headlong into hell, and in an instant to create, if He please, a more noble creature ? How great, then, was this love of God that, after our fall, vouchsafed so graciously to seek us, and, after we had offended Him, to exalt us higher than we

were before ? What a thing is this ! Did our sin deserve this exaltation ? Surely no ; but lest we should, O God, fly further from Thee, Thou wouldst unite man's nature inseparably unto Thee.

This Thy love, O my God, seems wonderful unto me, Who lovest and exaltest *them* that hate *Thee*. If therefore Thou, Who art the sovereign Lord of all, dost so exceedingly love *us* that are nothing, how comes it to pass that we miserable wretches do not love *Thee* that art the sole and only good ? Oh, the heart of man that contemplates this love of God ! how is it that you do not faint with love in the consideration of such an excellent affection of love ? What was God's design or desire herein but only to inebriate us with His love ? How great is this favour of our Creator that doth so much desire to unite and tie us to Himself with the bond of love ? What else can the heart of man think of ? And to the end that Thou, O our God, mightest thus exalt us, Thou wouldst be born a little infant ; and that Thou mightest make us heavenly, who by sin had degraded ourselves to the level of the beasts, Thou wouldst be laid among beasts in a manger ! Oh, the admirable diffusion of the Divine goodness ! Oh, the detestable blindness of our eyes ! O ice, no more a heart, why dost thou not melt at this heat ? Woe is me ! I know not by what other way God could better seek us than by this that He hath.

4. But what shall I say? Christ, that is the refuge of the banished, would Himself fly into *Egypt* (Matt. ii. 13). Didst Thou, Lord *Jesus*, that art everywhere, stand in need to fly? No, truly, for Thou hadst all Thine enemies in Thy power, but this Thou wouldst do, that, suffering for *me*, Thou mightest manifest Thy love *unto* me, and teach me, when I am persecuted, to fly *unto Thee*. O my God, I well see that Thou art wholly mine, and Thou wilt wholly possess me. But what needs any more? I silently pass over the whole course of Thy life, which was all full of love, and I come to Thy buffetings and spittings. Certainly the heart of man is not able sufficiently to consider this token of love. For if Thou never hadst done anything else, neither wouldst Thou ever after do any other thing else for me, even for this very cause only (that Thou, the eternal God, wouldst in my nature endure such indignities and disgraces), I ought wholly to be set on fire with this Thy love. For what is greater than God, and what viler than a sinner? And yet Thou, O God, wouldst be spit upon and derided by sinners *for* sinners.

O my God, what is this that Thou shouldst suffer such vile things of Thy creature which in the twinkling of an eye Thou couldst have utterly destroyed, and (among many of Thy heroical acts of virtue) didst give a gentle answer to them that said Thou wast possessed with a devil? O wonderful manifestation of Thine

immense charity that couldst, for our sakes, endure to hear such execrable and detestable words from men that were possessed with the devil indeed ! Why wast Thou so mindful of *us* as that *for us* Thou wouldst submit Thyself to all manner of disgraces ? But it was Thy exceeding great charity that moved Thee to endure all so patiently. O heart more hard than stone ! O heart, or rather no heart, why art thou not inflamed with this love ? Stones dissolved with the fire are converted into metal, and dost thou, notwithstanding so great heat as is applied unto thee, remain immutable ? I wish, therefore, that thou wert of stone, and not of flesh. For what thing can there be more strange than that a heart of flesh should be more hard and insensible than a stone ? But doth not our Lord say that *He will take from me my stony heart, and give unto me a heart of flesh ?* (Ezech. xi. 19). Nay, since that a stone is sooner changed, and more easily mollified than a heart of flesh, let him rather give us a heart of stone, and take away from us that of flesh. This I speak to our shame.

O most wicked heart, O most cruel heart, O most faithless heart, why dost thou thus hate thyself ? Why dost thou thus rend and consume thyself ? Why dost thou not love *Him* that so mightily loves *thee* ? O most cruel heart, why dost thou love death more than life ? Why dost thou not receive *Him* that seeks *thee* ? O all ye stones and insensible creatures, I summon you

all to come hither for to bewail the hardness and madness of my heart. Surely, Lord *Jesus*, if Thou didst hate me, yet because Thou art my God, my refuge, my sole protector and governor, I ought to love Thee. By how much more, then, when Thou so exceedingly lovest me, and with Thy benefits followest me flying from Thee? For Thou dost so extremely love me as that Thou seemest even for my sake to hate Thyself. For wouldst not Thou, Who art the Judge of all, be judged for me, and undergo a most shameful and grievous death? O my God, what couldst Thou do more for me than that Thou hast already done? Verily, if one of the meanest clowns in the world had done as much for me I ought to have loved him for ever, and shall I not, then, much more love Thee, my God? I will not say that the effusion of Thy blood, which was full of charity, but even Thy very face and visage, that was full of filthy spittings, ought to inebriate me with the love of Thee; how much more, then, ought Thy most grievous and ignominious *Passion*?

Surely Thou didst mean to have me wholly, seeing Thou gavest Thyself wholly *for* me and *to* me. But who required this at Thy hands, O my Lord? Why wast Thou so solicitous and careful for so vile a creature? Certainly nothing else could extort this *from* Thee, but Thy exceeding great goodness and immense love *to* me. For if Thou wouldst needs redeem us Thou couldst, if it pleased Thee, have done it by some other

means, but it pleased Thee to do thus, that Thou mightest more inflame us with Thy love.

O love and desire of my heart ! O delight and sweetness of my mind ! O ardour and inflammation of my thoughts ! O light and clearness of mine eyes ! O gold ! O melodious music ! O most odoriferous host offered to God the Father ! O mellifluous taste of Thy blood-shedding ! O most amorous touch of Thy blessed side ! O my soul ! O my life ! O the most intimate arteries of my heart ! O the marrow of my bones ! O Thou that art the vegetation of my flesh, the sensification and function of my organs, the inspiration of my understanding, my joy and exultation, why am I not wholly converted into Thy love ? Why is there anything else in me besides love ? How can I think or meditate of anything else ? And what is there more sweet than Thy love ? Or what else do I desire ? Why, then, am I not ensnared and taken therewith ? Thy love doth compass me about on every side, and wholly involve me, and yet I am so dull and senseless as that I know not what love is.

But woe is me ! Why do I remain so insensible without cause ? Why hath vanity allured me, and still doth allure me, more than Thou that art verity ? Why hath iniquity drawn me more than my Saviour's benignity ? Why have I loved the filth more than the exceeding great love of my Creator and Redeemer ?

5. O my God, how exceedingly hast Thou loved man ! Thou wouldst not only suffer for him on the Cross, but also go to visit him in hell, and carry him with Thee into heaven. Couldst not Thou, Lord *Jesus*, send some of Thine Angels for him, but Thou must needs go and fetch him out Thyself ? Why wilt Thou afford man Thy company everywhere ? Why wilt Thou dwell with man in every plan ? What hath man but vileness and wickedness ? Why, then, dost Thou so exceedingly love him ?

After Thy resurrection also Thou wouldst appear to man by times for the space of forty days, and likewise, when Thou wast glorified, Thou wouldst eat with him, give him Thy peace, and suffer Thy side to be handled by him. But what ? was it not, Lord *Jesus*, sufficient for man that Thou wast crucified for him, unless Thou didst also hale him from out of the profound and deepest pit of hell ? It seems that Thou didst so exceedingly love man as that Thou wouldst not depart from him. Wast Thou ignorant that we should be ungrateful for so excellent a benefit of Thy *Passion* ? Yea, even some of them whom Thou madest special choice of proved incredulous. How, then, canst Thou find in Thy heart to look upon us any more ? Oh, how admirable is Thy love, most sweet Lord *Jesus*, seeing Thou canst not be separated from man !

6. When Thou wast also to ascend into heaven, to the right hand of Thy Father, Thou gavest

power unto man to consecrate Thee, that so he might have Thee when he would in the Sacrament of the Altar. This power Thou gavest him before Thou beganst to suffer, to the end he might not fear to lose Thee utterly. But why wouldst Thou do this when Thou wast to send down the Holy Ghost ? Why wilt Thou always abide with man ? Thou wouldst also entirely incorporate us into Thy body, and give us Thine own blood to drink, that so, being inebriated with Thy love, we might have one heart and one soul with Thee. For what is it else to drink Thy blood, which is the seat of the soul, but to bind our soul inseparably with Thine ? This certainly is the thing which Thou wouldst have ; this certainly it is which Thou, O my God, desirest ; this it is which Thou, my Lord and Redeemer, in so long time as Thou wast upon the earth, procuredst. This was the thing for which Thou labouredst from Thine infancy, and this we pray Thee grant unto us, Who livest and reignest for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER III

HOW WE OUGHT TO HAVE GOD ALWAYS IN OUR HEART; AND WITHOUT DESPAIR OR PRESUMPTION, THINK OURSELVES THE WORST OF ALL OTHERS

1. How that a man ought willingly to give unto God his heart,
2. And so order his thoughts as that he always have God in his heart.
3. He ought to judge nobody, but to think himself the worst of all others.
4. How he can truly think so.
5. How he ought to resist the temptation of despair,
6. And presumption.

1. O MY Lord *Jesus*, Thou hast given Thyself wholly *to me*, and yet Thou demandest nothing *of me* but my heart. What a thing is this that Thou art so exceeding reasonable! For if I had a heart that were greater than all the hearts of the sons of men put together in one, and all the affections of Angels put into that heart, and (to speak morally) were greater and actually contained, or were able to contain more spiritual and corporal things than the whole extended cope of the empyreal heaven, I ought to give it all unto Thee, which notwithstanding would be so small a present as that it would be altogether unworthy of presenting to so great a Lord; yea, it would be in a manner as just nothing. How much more, then, ought I to give that small

portion of heart which I have *unto* Thee, and wholly place it *in* Thee? And this is one of the greatest favours Thou canst do me, that Thou wilt vouchsafe to have my heart of me. Were I not, then, a very fool if I should apply the same from henceforward to any creature when my God will have it for Himself? Nay, I will not have it to remain any more within *me*, but I will have it to rest wholly in *Thee*, who hast created it to praise Thee. It is a great deal better that my heart abide in eternal jollity, in the Divine Majesty and immense bounty, than in mine own frailty. It is better for it to be in Thy Deity than in mine own iniquity.

If thou wouldst have this, O Contemplative, desire it fervently with thy heart, and demand it earnestly with thy mouth, and *God will give thee the desire of thy soul, and thou shalt not be disappointed of thy will* (Ps. xx. 3), but lifting up thy mind, He will *prevent thee with the blessings of sweetness*, He will encompass thy soul with Himself as with a crown of precious stones. For *none can perfectly find God but he that perfectly hates himself*.

2. O man, will you know how to address your thoughts to God? You ought always to think yourself in the presence of your God, and ever have Him in your mind. Convert your thoughts also unto Christ, most grievously wounded—yea, and killed for you, and ever think that He which suffered so much for you is your God. In like manner have often recourse to the Mother of

Christ, who is the solace of the afflicted, and as often as you think of her think her to be the Mother of God ; that so, which way soever you direct your thoughts, you may ever have your God in your heart, and being always before Him, admiring His greatness and acknowledging your own misery, enter (as much as possibly may be) into consideration with yourself, and wonder not a little how He vouchsafes that a thing so filthy as yourself is should be presented before His eyes, and how He can possibly endure you to abide even so much as a moment in His presence.

Thus doing, you shall give God thanks, as well for this as for all other His benefits. And that you may the better thank Him, consider the greatness of the gift in everything that He bestows upon you. And this same very gift—namely, that you are permitted to remain always in His presence—and other gifts which our Lord hath given unto you, you ought with all diligence and vigilancy to keep, and continually with all eagerness to aspire to greater. And if through your own misery, or by reason of any exterior employment, you shall at any time observe your thoughts to be absent from Him, or to be any way hindered, endeavour with great anxiety and care to return where you were—namely, to the presence of God. And thus doing, the Holy Ghost will instruct you in other things how to make your spiritual progress.

3. And hold this for certain, that, whatsoever

others do, yet *you* ought always (so much as you can) to reduce yourself to nothing, and esteem yourself the greatest of all sinners, desiring pardon of God with all possible humility both for yourself and others. Upon which thing you may direct your consideration after this manner :

You ought oftentimes to consider and think with yourself that no other sinners are so far estranged from God but that they do sometimes, though not always, convert themselves in heart unto God, more intimately considering and more clearly acknowledging their Lord than you do, standing before Him with greater reverence, having more confusion and detestation of their sins, more humbly presenting themselves before Him, and, lastly, that they are moved at the presence of so great a good with a great deal more ardent affection than you are.

And if you cannot thus think of yourself from the very bottom of your heart, then think that you are most proud, and therefore ought you not to censure the consciences of others, and judge them to be equal with this your pride. Do not, then, judge nor condemn any sinner whatsoever, though never so notorious and public, because you know not what will be his end, for God is able to justify the wicked. Judge, therefore, yourself and not others, which if you cannot do, then ought you most firmly to believe that pride is the vice in which you do specially exceed all others, and by reason of which you cannot see

your own wickedness. And certainly if this be true, then have you cause enough to esteem yourself the worst of all men.

4. But perhaps your proud conceit suggests unto you, How can I truly think this of myself in respect of the infidels—to wit, that I am worse than they that know not God? But hearken, O blind pride; art thou ignorant that, if thou knowest God and believest Him to have redeemed thee by His most precious blood, and art lifted up with pride against Him, then thou dost more grievously offend than if thou didst not know these things at all? Is not *there* greater contempt where there is a greater measure of knowledge accompanied with sin? And where there is more contempt is not there more sin? Except, then, against none, O thou mad man; but, humbling thyself with all thy heart, acknowledge thine own misery.

5. And if such a thought arise in you—namely, that you are therefore a reprobate—then ought you, so soon as possibly may be, to expel it out of your heart, and not permit such a doubt in any case to remain within you.

Yet for all this you ought not a little to fear, extolling the goodness of the Most High God, and trusting to the wounds of *Christ* and in the clemency of His Mother, for the mercy of our God is infinite. And, therefore, if all the sins that ever have been committed, or hereafter shall be committed, were in you alone, His mercy doth

infinitely exceed all, and He for His most liberal mercy's sake would forgive you them all if you have recourse unto Him.

6. If likewise there arise a doubt in you, whether or no you be in charity, out of all doubt you ought greatly to fear and take heed that you do not determinately incline to any part, either one or other, but go on faithfully and hope in the mercy of God. For if you shall thus do, and after the examination of yourself shall repute yourself for a sinner, compassed about on every side with a night of darkness, and do sincerely lament for the same, converting your mind with all humility to the fountain of mercy, then shall your light shine in the midst of that darkness, and the most sweet mercy of our God shall lift you up to the contemplation of heavenly things, where you shall abound with all delights, saying with the Prophet, *And the night is my light in my delight* (Ps. cxxxviii. 11); which He vouchsafe to grant unto us, etc.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIRTUE OF A HEART THAT IS FERVENT IN THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE DANGER OF A TEPID HEART

1. How a man in all his actions may be more and more inflamed with the love of God.
2. The force of Divine love.
3. The dangers and damages of an infirm and tepid heart.

I. IF you would consider, O man, how that God hath created and formed you according to His own image, and for your sake hath made so many noble and excellent creatures, and taking upon Him your nature, hath redeemed you at so dear a rate, and likewise hath not only given you Himself for your food in this present life, but hath also promised you Himself for your reward in the life to come, and how He now conserves your nature, and infuses grace into you, all which He hath done for His own honour and glory; if, likewise, you did make Him your aim in all your actions, as you ought to do, and desire His honour, then (as altogether forgetful of yourself) you would esteem yourself for nothing, and whatsoever honour, consolation, tribulation, or injury happened unto you, you would account all as nothing, referring all to the praise and glory of your Creator. And whensoever you go about to do anything to the honour of God and the salvation of your soul, you ought not to question

the difficulty of it, but with all eagerness of mind and most fervent charity to put the same in execution.

2. For if, O man, you were well inflamed with the love of your Creator, you would esteem nothing to be painful or difficult that you do for Him. All things would be light and easy ; they would all appear sweet and pleasant, and you would do them so willingly, as that when you had done all, you would think that you had done nothing ; nay, you would rather think that you have done a great deal worse than if you had done nothing. For which cause you would so exceedingly hate yourself as that you would not in any wise be able to endure yourself, but would rather think how to do greater things, or at least do the same more exactly and perfectly, and would sincerely judge in your heart that you were well worthy to be punished for your defects and evil deeds. For you should not be a little ashamed and grieved to see yourself so miserably serve a God of so great worth and dignity.

What shall I say more ? By how much the more you profit, by so much the more you ought to think yourself defective, and should be the more ashamed and grieved thereat, and being inflamed with a greater fervour, you should ever strive to do greater things. For your appetite and desire ought never to be cloyed or satisfied in doing such things as concern the honour of God, but ever remain hungry and craving. Oh,

the wonderful heat of love which causeth every painful thing to be so soon digested, and at length convertest the same into an endless reward !

I do not doubt but, thus doing, your heart would boil with this exceeding great heat, and you would hate sleep and whatsoever else that should withdraw or withhold you but for a moment from the service of your God, and you would at all times seem to yourself to be slow and backward in serving God, and other servants of God, in respect of yourself, would seem unto you most forward and fervent, whose readiness would be a great joy unto you, and, on the contrary, your own laziness would exceedingly grieve you.

3. Enter, therefore, into a deep consideration hereof, and then your God will be exalted in your actions. For if you shall have a sick, faint, and earthly heart, you will esteem the very least service that you can do to be a great matter, and such things as are in comparison nothing will appear exceeding difficult, and such things as you would do most willingly for yourself, or for one of your meanest friends, you will think much to do them for your Most High God. Such things as are sweet and pleasant you will esteem bitter, and such as are most bitter you will esteem them to be sweet. Your infirm and weak eye will not endure to look upon the beams of the True Sun of justice, but will rather desire the dark. You would fain triumph over spiritual persons, not knowing that the devils triumph for joy over you.

But woe and alas be to you that are not worthy to be compared to the beasts ! I wish you had been made like those beasts that carry the burthens of their masters. Certainly you cannot condemn others of sin when you yourself are full fraught with all manner of wickedness. If, therefore, you have your hands and feet so fast bound with the fetters of sin as that you cannot serve your God with them, there remains nothing but that you be cast into outward darkness. From which He of His mercy keep us, of Whose mercy the whole world is full. Amen.

CHAPTER V

HOW A MAN SHOULD PERFECTLY HATE HIMSELF,
TO THE END HE MAY PERFECTLY LOVE GOD

1. Who is said truly to hate himself.
2. This hatred is gotten by prayer and the consideration of one's own vileness.
3. The profit of afflictions and danger of consolations.
4. Afflictions make us the friends and sons of God.
5. They make us conformable to Christ.
6. They give us full possession of God.
7. They keep us from all evil.
8. How the desire to suffer for God is to be obtained.

1. FORASMUCH as the love of ourselves doth greatly hinder us from having the love of God, and by how much the greater the one is, by so much the lesser is the other. To the end, there-

fore, that we may perfectly love God we ought perfectly to hate ourselves. You do, then, therefore, perfectly hate yourself when you desire with all your heart to be trampled upon of all men, to be reputed the worst in the whole world, to be abused, contemned, and, as it were, brought to nothing, and, esteeming all these things to be but little, you take delight in suffering injuries, and receive much comfort from your tribulations. So likewise when you are not only willing that these things should be done unto you by everyone, but also desire that they should think you worthy of them; which I speak the rather because there be many that desire to suffer adversities and crosses to the end that in the suffering of them they may be commended of men. Such manner of persons as these are do not hate but love themselves, and (the more is the pity) they receive their reward here in this world.

Again, you do, then, perfectly hate yourself when you are not only willing to be trampled upon of all men, but also are so odious and abominable in your own eyes as that you are scarce able to endure yourself, desiring that all unreasonable and insensible creatures should fight against you. And when you take anything for your corporal necessity that is delightful and pleasant to you (so it be not any way against God), you are greatly troubled against yourself, and seek for God only, refusing all things without Him.

2. You may obtain this exceeding great gift if confidently and from your heart you demand it of God, notwithstanding there may be on your part some certain things inducing and disposing you hereunto.

First of all, therefore, you ought to consider that you were born in sin, and from the time that you were regenerated, purged, and washed from the same in the bath of Baptism, and after you had the use of free-will even to this hour, you (being altogether unmindful of this your most healthful washing, derived from the side of *Christ Jesus*, and not fearing nor reverencing the Divine Majesty, in Whose presence you always stand) have been more injurious to yourself than the most cruel enemy that you have in all the world could be unto you. When you consider this thing, how is it possible but you should hate yourself? For what do we hate but evil things that are contrary and hurtful to us? And what thing can there be worse than for one to oppose himself against the chiefest good? Or what more contrary or pernicious to us than to reject the most wholesome medicine of the blood of *Christ*? Or what more hurtful than for one to murder his own soul? And yet such a one have you been to yourself—yea, and a great deal worse than you are able to imagine.

3. You ought also to consider that by how much the more you are troubled and afflicted outwardly, by so much the more is the way

stopped against you, that so you cannot err nor stray aside by being too much affected to the creature, but may so much the better have your repose and rest in the Most High God alone. Who, then, would not hate the opening of that enclosure out of which one may go from God? And certainly it is then opened, when the tribulation and affliction which we suffer is not loved but abhorred of us, desiring from our heart rather to rest and abide in the midst of corruption than in God. Think, then, that all reverence and honour is due unto God alone, and that He only in Himself and in His creatures is to be loved. And, therefore, if you love God truly you ought to shun and abhor to be loved of anybody. For why should not I abhor to have that attributed to *me* which is proper to *God*? Nay, I will rather desire and seek the contrary, lest, going about to keep myself in the mean, I incur the extreme.

Oh, how profitable are these outward afflictions! Certainly by *them* we come to the knowledge of our own misery, and by this knowledge of ourselves we come to the knowledge of God. For by how much the more one knows his own baseness, by so much the more he beholds the Divine Majesty. What, then, is more profitable than by this means to be humbled in earthly things and exalted to heavenly? Who, then, would refuse to be hated and trampled upon by everyone? Certainly I know none but a fool. If, therefore, O man, thou fearest such things as are inflicted

by weak men, how much more oughtest thou to fear those things that are inflicted by the Omnipotent God? But if you fear *them*, assuredly you will love and affect *these*. For these afflictions are the way to our country, and matter of great good. But consolations are the way to punishment and occasion of our eternal ruin, which defile and utterly destroy the soul, whereas they—to wit, afflictions—cleanse the soul from stains, and purge it from the dross of sins, that so being whitened and cleansed it may the better see God.

4. O God, *who* is there that doth not desire to have *this* but he that doth not desire to see *Thee*, or that desires not to hasten unto Thy glory? And how shall one be tried to be Thy true friend but by enduring adversities for Thee? Is true friendship tried in the consolations and honours of this world? Certainly if it were there would be very few evil persons found, because there be few, or none at all, which do not desire consolations. But such are discerned to be Thy children, whom Thou dost not cease to chastise, for Thou dost always abide with them. Let, therefore, none refuse, but rather love these afflictions if he mean to dwell as a special friend—yea, and as a most dear son—with our Lord.

Moreover, these afflictions do always prick us forward, making us to run both *faster* and *farther*, and causing us to ascend up to steep and high hills, and to contemplate heavenly things. These also do certainly teach us how to com-

passionate others of our fellow-members that suffer. For how shall I compassionate my neighbour suffering injuries, wrongs, and losses that never felt the same myself? For which cause the Apostle to the Hebrews saith: *For we have not a High Priest that cannot compassionate our infirmities* (Heb. iv. 15), and the reason is because He experienced the same in His own body as the Apostle doth in this place intimate. And if we do not now in this life compassionate others, how do we think to reign with Him in the next? Or if we be dead and insensible members, what remains but that we be cut off from the body?

5. Or else, tell me how can you know how to compassionate *Christ*, your Head that died for you, when you suffer nothing at all yourself? Or, lastly, if you suffer not *with* Him how can you be conformable *to* Him? But certainly, if there were nothing else to move you, yet this one thing only were enough to make you most greedy of suffering. What thing can there be worse or more pestiferous and deadly than not to compassionate the sufferings of *Christ*, or to be ungrateful for so great a benefit? Or, on the other side, what thing can there be more profitable and pleasant than to bear in our heart a full compassion of His *Passion*? Or else tell me what more noble than to be like unto the Son of God? But if we be unlike Him here, by reason of our consolations and honours, do we think to be partakers with Him hereafter in the inheritance

of the kingdom of God ? I tell you no. For what is more abominable than to see the Son of God, having taken upon Him man's nature, to suffer for *me*, that am most vile and sinful, so many injuries and miseries—yea, and to endure a most shameful and grievous death, and yet, notwithstanding, I myself would be honoured of all men, and abound in all delights ?

O man, mere dust and ashes, He, for the injury which thou didst do unto Him, adjudged Himself to such things as these ; He—that is to say, thy Advocate and Judge—took upon Himself this most severe and bitter judgment, and dost thou, that continually sinnest in His presence, think to go scot-free ? Show, then, thyself sorrowful before the eyes of Him that was so grievously afflicted for *thee*, and heartily offer thyself to suffer the like things, and then I do not doubt but, seeing that He was sufficiently punished Himself, if thou art willing to suffer the same again, and desirest it with all thy heart, that thou shalt not in any case suffer it, for He will not have one and the same injury to be punished twice. But that which thou thinkest to be injuries He will convert to thine honour, and what thou thinkest to be a tribulation thou shalt see to be changed into consolation, and where thou thinkest to receive loss thou shalt find great gain, and by how much the greater thy injury is, by so much the more honourable thou shalt be ; and by how much the more thy tribulation and afflictions are, by so

much the more shall be thy consolation ; and if thou shalt forego all things for His sake, certainly thou shalt possess *Him* that is all things. But if, on the contrary, thou shalt aspire to worldly honour, then thou shalt be despised and abused ; if thou shalt desire consolation, thou shalt receive tribulation ; if temporal things, thou shalt be poor.

6. For he that seeks after anything besides God shall be sure to find nothing but affliction. And he that disordinately loves himself slays himself, but if he hate himself and love God he shall entirely possess himself. Whereupon it is that he which loves God hath God. So that if he love God only then he wholly possesses Him. And, therefore, by how much the more perfectly He loves God, by so much the more perfectly He hath Him.

O most foolish men, how is it that you do not cast your eyes hither ? Why do ye not hate yourselves and all things else that so ye may obtain so great a good ? Certainly, if you did but see that you could possess the Creator of all things, and that your mind should be quieted in Him, you would repute all worldly things to be vanity, and your very bodies, while they be yet alive, would be loathsome unto you. For even as if anyone should take and remove some filthy thing out of your sight you would give him thanks, so in like manner ought you to do if any should afflict and torment you even unto death. And as if any should abhor that

which you loathe you would be glad, even so if any shall detest and hate you, wronging you both in word and deed, you ought also to rejoice.

7. For there can nothing happen cross unto you, neither can consolations and honours in sort beguile you, because you care not for them, but rather desire and seek the contrary. Neither can adversities beguile you because you affect them—yea, by how much the greater shall be your tribulation, by so much the greater will be your consolation, because by this your desire will be the more fulfilled. And verily so it ought to be. For who is there that would not rejoice if he were *disjoined* from temporal vanity and *conjoined* to the eternal verity? And are not *all these things vanity* (Eccles. i. 2)? And what is vanity? Even nothing but God. And therefore all things besides God, or such as tend to God, are to be abhorred. For if, O man, you were so as that you would be delighted in God alone, and thirst after His honour only, then would you not love but hate yourself, as hath been said; you would desire to be contemned of others, hereby stopping the devil's passage so as he could not in any wise enter into you. For herein do the doctors agree that the cause of all sin is fear or love—yea, the very cause of fear is the love of one's self. How, then, can you sin of fear, who desire to be afflicted, contemned, and trampled upon by everyone? And how can you sin out of too much love to yourself,

who perfectly hate yourself, and love your Creator ?

Certainly, if you had these two things you would be separated from all foulness and deformity, and would attain to perfect innocency, and to the highest degree of sanctity that could be. And whereas formerly you were the slave of the devil, you would by this means become the greatest in the kingdom of God.

8. Why, then, do you delay to get these things ? Why do we neglect to have this perfection of mind ? Will God deny to give us this most excellent gift if we demand the same of Him ? Certainly no, I assure you of it, as I well may—yea, He will give it you most willingly. I do not say that He will give you the gift to suffer, because this is a thing which He doth not grant to everyone, but He will give you a will and desire to suffer, and, peradventure, if you be worthy, He will give you that too.

But it may be you will say, “I cannot take so much pains for the attaining to so great sanctity as to love God only, and to hate myself above all things, desiring to be despised of others.” Wherefore I say unto you that for the getting hereof there is not required any outward labour or health of body, but rather solicitude of heart and quietness of body, labour of the heart and quietness of mind. There is not, I say, required much outward labour, because by it the inward man is destroyed, or at least distracted, notwithstanding

ing the labour of piety and humility is profitable to this and all other things so as a man do keep quietness of mind. Neither is health of body requisite, because it is repugnant to the health of the spirit. But there is required the labour of the heart in raising and lifting itself wholly from these terrestrial things, and ascending to such as are celestial, and in ascending there is required quietness of mind. For God doth greatly abhor when, after one hath tasted of Him, he doth not then rest in Him, but rather, as though God were not sufficient, he returns to corruptible things, and after he hath been defiled therewith he will embrace God again. But there is none that dares deal thus even with the most clownish boor that is, and, therefore, herein we disesteem God, and treat Him with contempt. And yet, notwithstanding we would have Him satisfy our will and desire in all things. But that is not the way. If you would obtain this gift, so far excelling all others, without repulse, reverently go unto Him and there make your abode, earnestly begging of Him that He would not permit you any more to forsake Him. And if you shall thus do, I do not doubt but, being illuminated by the eternal splendour, you will see your own miseries, and hate yourself above all things ; you will feel in yourself the Divine goodness, you will esteem all things to be as dirt, and desire to be joined with the bond of love unto God alone. Which He grant unto us, Who is blessed for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER VI

HOW A MAN IN EVERY ACTION OUGHT TO ENJOY
CONTEMPLATION

1. How that a man in every action ought to enjoy contemplation,
2. Which is done by referring all things only to God.
3. By so doing Martha and Mary shall not be parted.
4. An example hereof in the visiting of the sick.
5. How a man may after a manner deify himself.

1. IF man were thoroughly inebriated with the love of his Creator he would in all things seek nothing else but how he might serve Him with the greatest diligence and perfection that might be, and altogether breaking himself, so much as he can, of his own will, he would endeavour with all force of mind to accomplish such things only as he thinks to be pleasing unto God, and so *in* all things and *by* all things would not *seek such things as are his own, but such things as are Jesus Christ's* (Phil. ii. 21), forgetting after a manner himself and being mindful only of God.

Such a man as this, that is thus perfect by reason of the fervour and immensity of his love, would not, as I suppose, make any great difference between degree and degree, life and life, state and state, person and person, time and time, place and place, and other such-like circumstances; but after any manner whatsoever, and at any time, would see what would chiefly please his Creator,

and would labour to do the same out of hand, tending with all the affection of his mind unto God. For the nearer that the creatures do approach unto God, by so much the more are they united together amongst themselves.

2. He, therefore, that doth communicate and refer all things to one general community (which he doth that seeketh no other thing at all, saving the sole honour and glory of God, for which all things were made and ordained), and doth unite and join them to their Creator (which, then, is done when he doth place them all in God, and hath respect to nothing else but God alone, as if in all things he saw nothing but *Him*, sighing and incessantly breathing after *Him*, always prepared, and with an ardent desire inflamed, to serve and please *Him*)—such a man, I say, would not have regard to that which would be most sweet and pleasant to himself, but to that which might be most grateful to his God.

3. Oh, happy such a one that hath the contemplative life joined together with the active, because by this means he so ministers to our Lord with *Martha*, as that he departs not from his feet with *Mary*, hereby endeavouring to conform himself to the Angelic spirits who minister to *us*, and yet for all that are never without the Divine contemplation. For what else is it for one to minister to our Lord but when he ministers to him that is well, or visits and serves the sick, always to behold our Lord in *them*, and to enjoy

God in our neighbour ? He helps and serves the sick, and yet his mind is never separated from God ; he reaches his hand to his neighbour, and his heart to God. He serves his neighbour, not as man, but as God in man, and he refers all to *Jesus*, Who says : *What ye have done to one of my little ones ye have done it to Me* (Matt. xxv. 40). And, therefore, when he sees his neighbour sick in bed he thinks that he sees his *Christ*, and for this cause nothing is difficult to him, nothing is abominable or loathsome ; he esteems nothing ignominious or disgraceful to him that he doth for the sick, or for any others that be in misery or necessity, but he judgeth all things to be sweet, pleasant, and delightsome when he thus ministers to *Christ* in his neighbour.

4. And I devoutly believe without prejudice that he which should thus fervently and diligently minister (as hath been said) to *Christ* in his neighbour purely *for Christ*, and tending to *Christ*, would gain *far greater merit*, his *death* would be more *virtuous*, and his *reward* from God more *glorious* than if he ministered to *Christ's* own body. For the veriest miscreant in all the world, if he saw *Christ* in bed, and certainly knew it to be *Christ*, there is no doubt but he would fervently and diligently minister unto Him. But to minister with so great fervour and diligence to *Christ* in one's neighbour there is none that would do this, as I suppose, but he that is perfect—yea, as I may well say, more than perfect. And there-

fore, let us strive all that possibly we can to obtain this same grace.

Who, then, is there amongst *us* that from henceforward will abhor the leper, avoid the sick, neglect the desolate and miserable, when in them we behold *Christ* ; and the relieving of *them* will be a work a great deal more meritorious to ourselves and more pleasing to God (as hath been proved) than if we should minister to *Christ* Himself in His own person.

O my soul, why art thou continually disquieted in seeking of *Christ* ? I will show thee, O spouse, Him Whom thy soul loveth. See where He lies in the infirmary. He is there sick and in pain. Make haste, then, and minister unto Him, and compassionate His misery. Why dost thou, O spouse, so much desire to receive a kiss from thy husband ? Come to the leper and kiss him, for that is *He*. Why dost thou say, O miserable spouse, that thou dost languish away for love of thy husband, when as thou seest Him every day to pass by thee naked, unshod, and afflicted, and yet thou refuseth to help Him—yea, dost not so much as pity Him ? Howsoever, therefore, brethren, we cannot pleasure all because there be a great many who stand in need ; yet let us at least pity all, and consider *Christ* in all.

I am most certain that if we neglect *Christ* on earth we shall not enjoy Him in heaven. Hear what Himself saith : *I was sick, and ye did not*

visit Me, etc. *Go, ye cursed*, etc. (Matt. xxv. 43). And you know full well that these are not *my* words, but the words of ineffable Truth. Let us, therefore, brethren, stand in fear of this rigorous sentence who have so often neglected Him, and do still neglect Him. Let us not from henceforward inquire of Him, nor say unto Him: *Where liest Thou, or where dost Thou rest at noon?* (Cant. i. 6), because we now know His place. For we know that He lies in the Infirmary, and there remains nothing else but that we go and serve Him.

5. Hear my counsel, I pray you, and do not look upon my deeds. For he that will, as I said, enjoy the contemplative life with the active, contemplating his Lord in all things, it seems to me that this way is short and good; to wit, that, wholly recollecting himself, he enter into the most inward secrets of his heart, and there resolve, and, as it were, melt himself in God, so that he neither see nor feel anything in all the world but God. And so, being after a manner Deified and transformed into God, to whatsoever He turns him, he will consider nothing but God, and what work soever he does he will think he does it not to man, but to God alone. And as long as he shall observe and keep this form he shall see God in all things, and in his active labour shall enjoy the contemplative life. And if it happens, as it well may, that a man depart from this same excellent form, let him straightway endeavour to

return unto it again, and let him do it so often till he get a habit of it ; and let him believe that the same is obtained more by prayer and the bounty of God than by any labour and pains-taking.

And if these things seem too hard unto you, then endeavour at least that always and in all things you seek to do that which is most honourable to God, conformable to *Christ*, profitable to yourself and your neighbour, and also most painful and ignominious to your own body. Which He grant unto us Who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER VII

HOW DELIGHTFUL AND ATTRACTIVE THE LOVE OF GOD IS !

1. It glues God and man fast together.
2. It melts the hard heart of a sinner.
3. And that beyond all merit.
4. The kingdom of Divine love is within us.

1. *My soul melted within me, as my beloved spake* (Cant. v. 6). Oh, the admirable and inestimable force of love ! It inclines God to earth, elevates the mind to heaven, and joins God and man together in glory. It makes God to become man, and man to become God ; it makes that which is temporal to be eternal ; it kills the immortal,

and makes the mortal to become immortal ; it makes that which is low to be high, an enemy a friend, a servant a son, and that which is abominable to become glorious ; it makes cold things hot, dark clear, and hard soft. For *my soul melted*, etc.

2. O admirable word ! O exceeding delectable word ! I Thy most vile and wicked servant, O my Lord God—nay, who am not worthy to be nor to be called so much as Thy creature—with how great a bond of charity am I bound unto Thee, that at Thy very words I melt away for love ! Oh, the heat of love, that pourest the inwards of man's mind into God as into a vessel ! For my soul was before of adamant, and the inwards thereof exceeding hard ; but now it is, through Thy love, melted and resolved ; it is gone out of itself, and is wholly poured forth unto God ; it leaves its own mansion, and runs to God ; it is absorbed of God, and altogether forgets itself.

O Love, what shall I render unto thee, that hast thus made me to become Divine ? *I live, and yet not I, but Christ lives in me* (Gal. ii. 20). Unspeakable is thy force, O Love, that transformest dirt unto God. What thing, therefore, is there more powerful than this ? What more sweet ? What more pleasant ? And what more noble, I pray ? O good Love, that placest earth in heaven, I swoon when I think of thee because thou unitest me to my Beloved ! O happy Love, that makest us to pine away with desire to enjoy the em-

bracings of our Husband ! O desirable Love, that fillest the needy with most delicate and delicious pleasures ! But if, O my soul, thou meltest away at His *words*, how art thou able to endure His *embracings* ? Why art thou not wholly consumed with His kisses ? If thou art melted at His speech, how comes it to pass that thou art not quite absorbed when thou enterest in at His wounds, and comest even to His very heart ? Or, rather, if thou art melted at His speech, how is it that thou art not wholly consumed when thou eatest His flesh and drinkest His blood ? But, O wonderful sweetness and pleasantness ! that which we are not worthy to name we are permitted to eat. I do not deserve to be His meanest servant, and yet I am admitted among the number of His dearest friends. Who is able to look upon the least sparkle of so great love ? What is this ? Truly I know not what it is ; I am not able to comprehend it ; but I am amazed thereat with admiration, I am delighted with delectation, and inebriated with exultation.

3. But what have I merited, what have I done, that Thou vouchsafest to confer so great benefits upon me ? I have persecuted Thee, and I am placed *in* Thee ; I have spit in *Thy* face, and Thou kissest *me* ; I have wounded *Thee* with a sword, and Thou hast delivered *me* from death ; I have filled *Thee* with grief and sorrow, and Thou hast filled *me* with joy and comfort ; I have killed *Thee*, O my God, and Thou hast given *me* a

happy life. *O the wonderful change of Thy right hand !* (Ps. lxxvi. 11). It is not, therefore, any wonder if my heart melt at Thy Word ; yea, from henceforth I will be all on a fire, and wholly melt away, that I may be wholly poured forth in *Thee*, that I may see nothing but *Thee*, and that all my thoughts, words, and deeds may aim at no other *but save Thee*. Yea, it seems a wonder how that we are not so intent to *Thee* that we forget all things besides *Thee*. For if we have *Thee*, what else would we have ?

4. Let, therefore, O most sweet Lord *Jesus*, our soul rest in *Thee*, and let it not (even for a moment) be ever separated from *Thee*. For it is a most foolish thing to be out of so noble and pleasant a place. How dare we, then, but continually have our eyes fixed hard on our most sweet beloved, for fear lest while we look aside He be taken away from our presence ? What can move us, I pray, to look upon anything else ? Are not all earthly things vanity and corruption ? And is not this the chiefest good ? Why, then, are not all things unsavoury and despicable unto us ? Why do not all things melt away at the presence of so great a good ? Oh, oh, oh, the folly of wicked men ! Return, O ye sinners, and repent. The kingdom of God is within you, and you run after vanity and corruption, and submit your necks to the devil's servitude. Certainly God is within you ; be therefore converted unto Him, and enjoy Him, and Whom you have here-

tofore contemned ; now and from henceforward be content with Him, and let Him be your only portion. Which He grant unto us, Who liveth and reigneth for ever ! Amen.

CHAPTER VIII

OF THINKING ALWAYS UPON THE PRESENCE OF GOD

1. To the end that a man may be well ordered in his thoughts, words, and works, he ought always to have in his mind the presence of God.

2. This begets in us holy fear and reverence,

3. And most ardent love and charity.

4. The rule of this Divine presence is to diffide in a man's self and confide only in God.

1. THE servant of God ought never to think, speak, or do anything else, nor after any other manner of way, than if he saw God face to face. For out of all doubt, God is so present with us, and doth so behold us as if we were in the empyreal heaven, in the place where the Blessed Virgin sits, although He be not with His influence so here as He is there. And therefore, although we do not see Him with our eyes, yet, because we know He is near us—yea, in the most inward corner of our heart—we ought not to speak or do more or less, or otherwise, than if we did always behold Him.

2. For the servant of an Emperor would fear

as much if the Emperor were near him and saw him, and he could not see the Emperor, as he would fear if he saw the Emperor—yea, and perhaps more too ; for there is no servant but would be afraid to be seen of his master. And therefore, if a servant should know for certain that his master could not see him nor know what he did, I suppose he would not then stand in fear of his master. But if he knew that he were seen of his master, although his master were not seen of *him*, then he would be exceedingly afraid. By how much the more, then, ought we to fear our Lord, because He is *with* us and *in* us, and sees all things that we do ? We ought, therefore, always to be moved with fear, reverence, devotion, and love towards Him, and with shame for our sins.

3. But out of doubt, it is a wonderful thing how that so small a sparkle as is our heart is not wholly absorbed of the immense Divine goodness, and how the servant of God is not always inebriated with the love of his Lord. I do believe that this thing may be very well obtained if he would apply his heart to the immense goodness. And therefore let none doubt but by how much the more he applies his heart to the Divine goodness, he shall be so much the better and perfecter ; and he that can so apply his heart to the chiefest good, as that (wholly forgetting all things besides Him) he would with all the endeavour of his mind bend himself towards Him,

and there set up his rest, not suddenly starting from so great a good—I do verily think that such a one, being absorbed in the Divine sweetness, would be in a most perfect state. For then, between consolations and tribulations, honours and dishonours, praises and dispraises, he would pass through all without being overcome of any, thirsting after nothing but his God, and desiring only *His* honour. Then may he be said to be rather in heaven than on earth ; to be happy than miserable ; an Angel than a man ; and not a sinner, but a Saint.

4. And if, O man, you would attain hereunto, observe this short rule : Whosoever he be that desires to be in perfect state ought altogether to despair of his own force and virtue ; and, wholly converting and committing himself into the hands of the immense Piety, let him with all his heart trust therein ; and omitting nothing, so far as in him lies, of things contingent, let him demean and carry himself faithfully in all such things as he shall see to make for the honour of God.

But that which is written in the aforesaid rule is the exceeding great gift of God ; and whosoever hath it, let him faithfully acknowledge that he hath it not from himself, but from God, knowing for certain that of himself he is altogether incapable thereof, but rather that he is worthy of the torments of eternal death : from which death He preserve us, Who is blessed for evermore ! Amen.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE ORDERING OF A MAN'S SELF TOWARDS HIS NEIGHBOUR

1. You ought to think every man to be yourself.
2. By so doing you will shun all singularity, and appropriate nothing to yourself but your faults.
3. True charity makes this easy.
4. To the end that one may profit his neighbour he is to look to the interior man, leaving the exterior.
5. It is doleful to see the image of God in one's neighbour to be deformed.
6. For which we should desire to die many millions of deaths, as St. Bonaventure himself does.
7. And that only for the love of God, and in the virtue and grace of Him alone.

I. CONCERNING your neighbours, take this lesson. *Think every man in the world to be yourself*, and if you shall well perform this, and imprint the same well in your heart, then there is no doubt but you will love *his* good as your own; and what you shall see in any way to make for his salvation, you will be as careful to procure by prayer, exhortation, help, and any way whatsoever that you are able, as for yourself. And when you shall see him to speak or do that which is good, you will be as glad as if you did speak or do it yourself; and if you shall know him to be in sin, or in any spiritual defect, you will be exceeding sorry, and ready, as far as lies in your power, to reclaim him from evil, and

induct him to goodness. Concerning his bodily miseries, you will as much pity him as if you felt them in your own body ; and you will as willingly and diligently serve him—yea, and a great deal rather than you would be served yourself, because you ought to hate yourself, but you ought to love him. If, therefore, he shall offend you in word or deed, you will care no more than if you spake or did it yourself ; nay, it will be a great deal more pleasant unto you, because therein is a greater occasion of merit unto you. And if you yourself shall do or speak anything that is good, you will be no more proud thereof than if another had done or spoken it. And if you shall do anything amiss before him, you will care no more than if you had done it in private, where nobody had seen the same.

2. From hence, therefore, it follows that if you shall repute everyone to be yourself, you will not have any singular or special friends, because all will be in a manner singular and special unto you. And for this cause you will not love any one person more than another, but so far forth as you shall know him to be better than others, and not because he is of greater acquaintance, or better known unto you. Neither ought we to be affected towards any good thing whatsoever, but towards God alone, either absolutely in Himself, or so far forth as He is more beneficial to this or that man. Notwithstanding we may pray more for such persons to whom we are most

obliged, yet we ought not so to pray for them as that we exclude others.

But there is one thing only which you ought to appropriate to yourself—namely, your faults and defects—esteeming yourself to be worse than anybody, and reputed not only your own sins, but also the sins of others to be yours ; and therefore you shall pray for the forgiveness of them as for your own.

3. And if you shall say, How can I esteem all men to be myself ? I answer that perfect charity doth teach you this, which, joining you unto them, doth make you to be one with them. Notwithstanding that person doth more clearly see this, and is more easily moved to do it, that hath wholly rooted his heart in the honour of God, seeking nothing else in all the world, either in himself or others. This, then, is the most excellent way of all other—that he which will love God and his neighbour ought to thirst after the honour of God only, and with great earnestness seek the same, aiming at nothing else in all things. Which the eternal God grant unto us ! Amen.

4. The manner and form of preparing and disposing of a man's self ought to be in such wise that he gain his neighbour without loss and prejudice of himself. For it oftentimes comes to pass that in procuring the salvation of others we neglect—yea, and quite destroy—our own. Whenas, therefore, you will pray for your neighbour, preach or read to him, or hear his confession, or

do any other such-like thing, first of all, convert the face of your mind to the eternal light and to his splendour ; be strong in spirit, that the flesh get not the upper hand ; abstain from the outward man so much as you can, that so you may be only converted in your inward man to his. Then consider the said inward man in your neighbour, not caring anything for his outward man but so far forth as it is ordained for his inward. Then, I say, let your interior man be converted into the interior man of your neighbour, and let the exterior man of you both in the aforesaid acts be neglected as mere vanity, lest, instead of the exterior, the interior be drawn to vanity. Leaving, therefore, the same exterior man of your neighbour, consider him in his interior man made according to the image of God, redeemed with the blood of *Christ*, a habitation of the Holy Ghost, the spouse of *Christ*, the residence of the virtue and wisdom of God, and capable of eternal happiness.

5. And then, thirsting after the honour of your Lord, lament and weep because you see His image to be defiled, His most precious blood trampled underfoot, the habitation of the Holy Ghost polluted, the spouse of *Christ* to be dishonoured, His seat to be thrown down, and all the beatitude thereof to be condemned for what is most vile and loathsome.

Certainly it is a wonderful thing how that the eyes of any just and holy person can abstain from

weeping, seeing so great madness to be in his neighbour (yea, and that hath been sometimes in himself), and so great injury to be done to his God. Who is there, I pray, that will give unto me, that, being clothed with *Mardocheus* in sack-cloth (Esth. iv. 1), I may weep all the day long, and go howling even to the gates of the Palace, for so great a massacre of the people, not imminent and at hand, as was that of the *Jews*, but already past and gone? For if He, out of His exceeding great charity, did publicly show so much grief and sorrow for the corporal death of the *Jews*, how much more should I, miserable wretch that I am, never cease weeping, who see the destruction of an infinite company of souls, and my God to be reputed as nothing? Let the soul of the just man be encouraged with the consideration of these things, and (not enduring the contempt of his God, but grieving for the death of so many souls) let him do his endeavour by all means that possibly he can to free and deliver those souls from their sins. How can he say that he loves God and seeks after His love that, seeing his image to be in the dunghill, doth not take it to heart? Or if he think that the Son of God died for the redemption of souls, how is it that he doth not also desire to die for the gaining of souls? But, above all, when he sees the blood of *Christ* to be trampled underfoot, how, I pray, can he possibly endure this injury of his Lord? Why doth he not wholly pour forth himself in prayer,

continually calling upon his neighbour by preaching, or instructing him by reading, or by hearing of confessions, to the end he may preserve and save this same blood of his Lord by winning and converting of souls ?

What shall I say more ? Do you think yourself to be an habitation of the Holy Ghost, when, seeing His Temple to be defiled, you do not cry out, but dissemble the matter as though it did not concern you, because you love your own ease and quietness ? God forbid. How can you think to have the friendship of the husband, that do not shield his wife from harm, or do not reprehend her insulter when you may, or do not carry him in all haste before the husband ? Or how can you eternally enjoy the Chiefest Good when you see Him to be so exceedingly contemned as to be changed for most vile and loathsome corruption, or else to be altogether neglected, or rather blasphemed, and yet do not seek to remove the minds of men from this contempt and to convert them to the love of God ?

6. Let our hearts, I pray you, at the hearing of these things rend asunder, and let us not in any case endure so great an injury to God. And to the end I may allure you to the zeal of souls, I confess sincerely, and it is imprinted in *my* heart, that if I were most certain never to enjoy my God, yet notwithstanding, for His honour's sake, I would most willingly die a several death for every sinful soul, enduring so many deaths as

there are sinful souls in the world, that they may obtain grace here and glory hereafter. How much more rather, then, ought I to do this if I should afterwards be glorified with them ?

7. *These things*, most dear brethren—to wit, *the contempt of God* and *the loss of souls*—ought to inflame us to preach, confess, pray, and edify by good examples, and not vainglory, nor pride of heart, nor popular applause, nor any worldly profit whatsoever. Let us seek for nothing of souls but *Jesus Christ* crucified—for *they are bought with a great price*—(1 Cor. vi. 20), that they would either pay the price of their redemption themselves, or remain in their state and condition of redemption. Let us inebriate them with blood, not with vain curiosity, to the end they may desire our Lord crucified. Let every one of us say unto them : *I judged myself to know nothing among you, saving only our Lord Jesus, and Him crucified* (1 Cor. ii. 2), and not the philosophy of *Aristotle* or *Plato*. For I do think that he only can say this word who requires nothing of his neighbour but the *Passion of Christ*, and who in every one of his neighbours seems to himself that he sees *Jesus Christ* crucified. Whence it is that the Apostle very significantly says, *I judged myself to know nothing among you*, as if he had said : I do not only not desire that which is yours, or to please yourselves, but I judge myself not to know so much as yourselves, or anything else, but in all things our Lord *Jesus* only, and

Him crucified. And he says well, *I judged not*, because, although I know other things habitually, yet notwithstanding I am so intent to this—namely, the *Passion of Christ*—as that my judgment is not bent to anything else.

That speech may also be otherwise expounded for the consolation of souls—that is to say : I am so exceedingly inebriated with this *Passion* as what thing soever else is offered unto me, to my sight, taste, hearing, or any other sense, and what thing soever there is besides this, I repute all to be as nothing, because now I am not delighted I do not now make any boasting ; I have no being nor abiding at all but in the blood of *Christ*, for I am wholly converted unto the same. Mine eyes are not full of iniquity, but of the torments of *Christ* ; my mouth is not full of detraction, but of *Christ's Passion*. And so you may after the same manner go through the other senses, who-soever you are that can say this ; for this word is far from *me*. And if in these words this was not the intention of *St. Paul*, yet let it be ours, because my intention in this place is not to expound the intention of *St. Paul*, but to excite our own devotion : which He grant unto us, Who is blessed for evermore ! Amen.

CHAPTER X

THAT A SOUL OUGHT TO BE AFFECTED ONLY WITH
THE LOVE OF CHRIST AND THE CONTEMPT OF
EARTHLY THINGS

1. That a soul ought to be affected only with the love of Christ, having all earthly things in contempt.
2. A description of blessedness.
3. A most devout and pathetic prayer.
4. The sinner is a most foolish merchant.
5. Everyone ought to live well, although he were sure to live many thousands of years.

I. A REASONABLE soul created according to the Divine image, placed in the middle betwixt God and unreasonable creatures, ought not to incline itself to the love of inferior things, but lift itself up unto God alone, and (being inebriated with His love) condemn all base things that are beneath it. And if it happen that at any time it convert itself to any creature, though equal to itself or above it—to wit, some man or Angel—it presently ought to refer all things to the love of her beloved, heartily and violently tending to her husband alone; for the dovelike spouse can find no place whereon to set her foot save only in her husband, nor knows where to repose and rest but in him: the most chaste spouse knows not where to live but in her husband, as the fish that can live nowhere else but in the water; the delicate soul doth there swim and sport—she is there delighted and refreshed with unspeakable and

most sweet nutriment, and if by any manner of means she gets forth, she straightway begins to pant, and seek a way to return to the river again. Out of him she judges all to be death, she is so wholly melted and resolved into her beloved.

O Love, what dost thou do ? What is more noble than this love ? What is more profitable ? What more delectable ? And yet all, or very near all, neglect this love. Concerning which love it may truly be said : *He that abides in God, God doth also abide in him* (1 John iv. 16) ; which He grant unto us, Who is blessed for evermore ! Amen.

2. Receive, good brother, a few words which I, who am altogether unworthy, shall speak concerning blessedness. For I think (be it spoken under correction) it may be thus described : Blessedness is a full and inward resolution of ourselves into God. Blessedness is the greatest joy in the honour of God. Blessedness is a consummation of marriage performed by most chaste and eternal embracings betwixt the wife and the husband. Blessedness is an inebriation of the Divine sweetness without end. Blessedness is the eternal Sun of justice. Blessedness is a full refection, with an immense desire : to which He bring us, *Jesus Christ*, Who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever ! Amen.

3. O my God ! O my love ! O delectable light ! O most sweet irradiation ! O most pleasant contemplation ! O Divine nutriment, most sweet

food, most savoury meat, unspeakable repast !
O mellifluous kiss and most blessed embraces !
O indissoluble conjunction, cordial diffusion,
inward transformation ! O most loving en-
kindling ! O provoking, inflaming, most sober
inebriation and most solid melting ! O my
husband ! O my God ! O my love ! O the joy
of my heart ! O the ardour of my mind ! O the
inflaming of my love ! O most sweet solace !
O most true gladness ! Illuminate my soul with
the most clear rays of Thy Divine splendour ;
transpierce it with the keen dart of Thy undefiled
chastity ; set it all on fire with the ardent flames
of Thy fervent charity, and refresh my desires,
that languish away for the love of Thee, with Thy
most savoury affections. Amen.

4. If some prince should invite a poor man to a
most plentiful and delicate banquet, in which were
all sufficiency and sweetness that could be found
in any creature whatsoever, and that same base
creature should loathe so noble and excellent a
banquet, and rather long after filth, such a one
ought to be reputed most foolish. In like
manner—yea, and beyond all comparison—every
man ought to be reputed a far greater fool, but
especially a priest, that eateth heavenly food,
and applies his heart to base and corruptible
things. And even as a wise man that hath been
delicately brought up will not only not desire to
have any kind of filthy, corrupt meat to feed on,
but will also abhor and loathe to see the same

come before him, or so much as to name it or to have it named : so every man, but especially a priest, ought to abhor whatsoever should any way hinder those his internal delights, or by any manner of means defile the habitation of *Christ*. And to this purpose he ought to keep his heart with all diligence that may be.

Oh the wonderful blindness of wicked men, who had rather buy one most vile consolation of the devil, though it be with the price of their souls, than to have the greatest and most excellent consolation that may be of God for nothing ! For who would not think him to be a very fool, that had rather buy of the vintner corrupt and unsavoury wine with the price of all his goods, and for such filthy drink wholly to bereave himself of all that he had, than to receive most pleasant wine of another for nothing, and by drinking of which he should be filled with all good ? So great a fool, and a great deal greater, is every sinner. And as that merchant is to be esteemed a fool, and one that will never come to be rich, who, being with other merchants, doth take good heed to the places, times, and manner of trading, and doth also speak hereof to others, and often think of the same with himself, and yet, notwithstanding, for all this doth never traffic himself—in like manner such a fool is he that is continually conversant in writing of books concerning the kingdom of heaven, and wholly busied therein, and also preacheth concerning the same

to others, and yet doth never any good work himself for the obtaining thereof. What profit is it for you, O ye foolish merchants, to study and preach, and not to fulfil the same in your own works ?

As a most noble and delicate wife, that having a husband most noble, fair, wise, and excellent in all things, would not be enamoured of a most loathsome leper, even so ought the affections of a perfect man not only to be separated, but not so much as any way to be slackened in the love of his God for the love of any creature ; neither ought he in any case, so far as he can, to be affected towards any creature whatsoever, but rather ought to abhor and loathe everything, as the aforesaid wife the leper ; which He grant unto us, Who is blessed for evermore ! Amen.

5. Everyone ought to live piously, justly, and chastely as though he knew for certain he should die the same day or hour. And therefore, in my opinion, it is no sign of perfection that which many do commonly say, to wit : “ If I knew I should die within a short time, I would then prepare myself, and live a holy life.” For one that is perfect ought not to say so, but rather thus : “ If I should live ten hundred thousand years, and I knew it for certain, I would lead so virtuous, just, and holy a life, and be as careful to serve my God, as if I were to pass out of the world this very day.” And herein doth it appear that one is the true child of God, and not a mercenary or hired servant, that serves for fear of

punishment or hope of reward. For as I love God and serve Him for Himself, and He is as good to me in a long life as in a short, so in like manner I ought to serve and love Him as well if I live long as if I should die soon.

CHAPTER XI

HOW A PRIEST OUGHT TO BEHAVE HIMSELF WHEN
HE COMES TO RECEIVE THE BODY OF
CHRIST

1. Six preparative considerations before Mass.
2. An immediate preparation.
3. Recollection after Mass.

I. FOR the worthy celebration of Mass there be six things to be observed :

First of all, *discretion of reason* in respect of the truth thereof—namely, that he know *what* He is that he receives, and *who* he is that receives. *What*—that is to say, true God, that made heaven and earth ; and true man, that hanged on the tree of the Cross for us. *Who*—that is to say, a man, and not a beast, unless it be by reason of sin. And therefore let a priest above all others abhor the filthiness of sin.

The second is *devotion of mind*, in respect of the holiness of the Sacrament. For a priest ought to consider that He Whom he is to receive is the Holy of all holies, and the Original of all holiness.

And therefore, as much as he can, let him come hereunto with holiness and devotion, putting far from him all bitterness of sin, by tears of compunction, and all dryness by devout and sweet prayer.

The third is *reverence of mind*, in respect of his sanctity and majesty, by reason of which so vile a creature ought to be afraid to approach near unto so excellent a Lord. For if a man that is infected with any loathsome disease be not worthy to stand in the presence of an Emperor, how much more unworthy is miserable man to receive his Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar, whose *justices are as the cloth of a menstrued woman* (Isa. lxiv. 6)! But if his justices be so, what, then, are his sins? And verily every man is most unworthy hereof. Yet let him consider that the worthiness of God is greater than our unworthiness, His mercy more than our misery.

The fourth is *love and desire of heart*, in respect of His goodness and bounty. And therefore a man ought to be very careful that he do not come with loathsomeness or tediousness of heart to this same Sacrament, wherein is contained the chiefest goodness and most infinite pleasantness. Wherefore it seems a wonderful thing, how in the receiving of this Blessed Sacrament a man is not melted with the heat of love, and how he is not absorbed with tasting of the Divine sweetness. Let him at that time consider the *Passion* of his Lord, if he will be inflamed in his love, and let

him meditate of the feeding upon His most noble body and blood if he will provoke in himself an appetite that shall afterwards be satisfied.

The fifth is *affectionate prayer*, and such as is humble in words, as well for himself as others, with confidence in respect of the Divine goodness. For he may securely demand of Him that says : *Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find* (Matt. vii. 7). And I do believe that this same Sacrament is instituted principally for this end, that we may demand pardon of our sins, and obtain grace by the oblation of that so excellent a Sacrifice.

The sixth is *exceeding great diligence* of the whole man, in respect of the immense nobility or most noble immensity of Him that is contained in the Sacrament. For if a secular Prince be served with great diligence, with how much greater diligence, then, ought a priest to minister unto his Lord, and with all circumspection handle that most high and worthy Sacrament, as though there were no other thing else to be done, or as if he should never do anything besides ! There ought to be here a total intention, a sufficient and distinct pronounciation of the words, without any confusion or diminution. There ought also to be a careful and discreet handling, accompanied with all modesty and honesty, to the end that the priest may do all things that there are to be done with due reverence and convenient diligence.

2. Furthermore, I counsel every priest that he,

above all other men, do at all times quit himself, so much as possibly he can, of all such things as may any way, either little or much, as well occasionally as actually, defile his heart, which ought to be the dwelling-place of the Great King. But let him abstain from all things, as far as he can at that time, especially when he goes to celebrate Mass. Let him be wholly recollected within himself, and not suffer his senses and cogitations to be employed about any other thing. Let him diligently examine his conscience, and what he shall there find worthy of washing, let him wash with abundance of tears. Let him go to confession, and there disgorge himself of all his venomous sins, and presently after, so soon as he hath done his penance (if it be such as he can then do), let him recollect himself again, and lift up his mind to the Divine Majesty. Let him also consider the bounty of God, and turn himself to his own misery, to the end he may see how great the Lord is, and how mean the servant—yea, how vain and unprofitable he is. Let him enter as far as he can into God, and let him be reduced in himself, as near as he can, to nothing. And when he shall be changed, and, as it were, made Divine, let him be as one that hears, sees, and feels nothing else but God, and let him repute all things besides God to be vanity. Then let him think how great the love of our God hath been towards us, Who for so vile and detestable a thing as we are would be reputed so vile, and become

worm, and unite unto Himself so vile a nature as man's is, and in the same nature endure such cruel and grievous things of most vile and abominable men. Then let him also consider the greatness of that charity, and, as much as he is able, let him be inflamed with the unspeakable heat thereof; and when he shall be all on fire with charity towards his Beloved, let him open his bowels of pity, and be inwardly moved with compassion towards Him that was so despised, afflicted, and wounded even to death; and let him transform all these wounds into himself, and be in such a case as though he were deadly wounded with them himself. And to the end that the wounds of *Christ* may be the more imprinted in his mind, let him run through them all, and let him meditate sometimes how much He suffered in this wound, and sometimes how much in that, and how much in the other. Let him diligently consider at one time what and how great were the disgraces that He suffered, at another time how many and how great were the lashes He suffered. And when in this meditation he shall be thus crucified with *Christ* (which thing is principally required in this Sacrament), then let him think that He hath vouchsafed to give that same noble flesh, which was sacrificed for us on the Altar of the Cross, to be our meat; and His blood, shed for the redemption of mankind, to be our drink: and never think that that blood which we receive in the Altar is out of His body, but that we

ought to receive the same as shed for us in His *Passion*—that is to say, with that intention. And then let us ponder in our minds His great love towards us, and consider the magnificence of that Sacrament, which, according to my understanding, should be done as well as possibly we are able, because scarce can anyone find out so much as a spark of the immense love of our Lord *Jesus Christ* in this most sumptuous Sacrament.

And when he hath well pondered that most noble Sacrament of our Saviour, and shall be now filled full with a certain celestial sweetness, let him with humility and reverence approach unto this Sacrament, and with all diligence go forward with his Mass, using such other circumstances as I have already set down in the beginning of this chapter. And when he shall receive he may, if he please, premeditate a little beforehand, and say in his heart as follows :

For the worthy receiving of this so noble a Sacrament a thousand years are not enough for one to prepare himself. How much more unworthy am I, most miserable wretch, that daily sin, and go on without any amendment, and now without due preparation approach hereunto ! Wherefore hast Thou made me, O Lord, as that I should offer Thee so horrible an injury as to put Thee into my soul, which is the very sink of all sin and iniquity ? For there is no filthy pool in all the world so loathsome as my sinful soul. Oh that

some river of compunction had run through this my unclean soul, that so there might not *there* have been gathered together such a foul and filthy heap of sins ! What is this, Lord *Jesus* ? Shall I put Thee there indeed ? But Thy mercy is infinitely greater than my misery, and therefore, wholly trusting in Thy bounty, I presume to receive Thee, coming as one that is sick to Thee, a most sweet Physician, craving that Thy medicines may heal me. For by how much the more sick I am, by so much the more do I stand in need of Thee, O my God ; and in my healing the immensity of Thy goodness will more manifestly appear. I will therefore with boldness come near unto my God, because His mercies are infinite, and I will enjoy the delights of the blessed with Him. I will go in *unto* Him, as a wife to her husband, and remain *with* Him, never to be separated *from* Him. I will no more cleave unto any other, to the end I may rejoice everlastingly with Him.

These and other such-like words he that will may say in heart, though not with his mouth, for I do not think it fitting to utter any other words at that time than such as are contained in the Canon. And note that, according to my judgment, these two things are very forcible for the worthy receiving of this Sacrament—that is to say, *compassion of the death of Christ, and a vilification, or rather annihilation, of a man's self*, that, so far as he can, he seem vile in his own

eyes, and altogether unworthy to receive the same.

3. And when the Sacrifice is ended, let him think in his heart and say : After such noble food I will no more love vanity ; and seeing herein is contained the greatest delight and sweetness that may be, I will never from henceforward be affected towards any creature whatsoever.

But if he shall receive no spiritual refection hereby, let him think it is a sign of exceeding great sickness or of death. For he hath put fire into his bosom, and he feels no heat ; honey in his mouth, and he tastes no sweetness. And therefore let such a one acknowledge his misery and amend his life. But if, on the contrary, he hath received thereby a spiritual refection, let him not attribute it to himself, but to the infinite bounty of the Divine Majesty, which extends itself to the good and bad. And let him say in his heart : My Lord God doth work wonderful things in me, to the detestation of my misery, to the conversion of myself and convincing of my iniquities by His benefits. For He hath made me that was dead to be alive, and a most vile worm to taste of heavenly things. If my Lord God hath done so much for me that am a sinner, what will He do for me if I amend my life, and with all my endeavour strive to wax every day better and better, wholly dedicating myself to Divine meditation, and from henceforward adhering to Him alone ? Which thing

let him think to do by the help of our Lord, and not by his own power or virtue. And what he thinks in heart let him fulfil in deed. Which He grant unto us, Who is blessed for ever ! Amen.

CHAPTER XII

A PRAYER FOR THE STIRRING UP OF A SINNER'S HEART TO THE LOVE OF CHRIST

1. From the consideration of his own baseness, and of God's majesty and goodness.
2. From the sight of his ingratitude.
3. He demands pardon and mercy.
4. He asks the ornament of virtues, and resigns himself wholly to Christ.
5. He has recourse to the example of Christ.
6. The purpose of a most devout love.

1. O LORD my God, how dare I, most vile creature, to be so bold as to speak unto Thee ? For I am a most filthy and loathsome person. I am most vile, a wicked worm, a most vain man. But Thou art the God of Gods, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, all good, all comely and fair, all profit, all pleasure, all sweetness, the fountain of brightness, the fountain of sweet savour, the fountain of love, the fountain of sweetness, and the most intimate and affectionate embracing. And yet notwithstanding all this Thou seekest after *me*, and I fly from *Thee* ; Thou art careful of *me*, and I am careless of *Thee* ; Thou dost

always serve *me*, and I do always offend *Thee* ; Thou givest Thyself to *me*, and I continually contemn *Thee* ; Thou lovest *me*, that am mere vanity and nothing, and I despise *Thee*, the most intimate and unspeakable good. I prefer that which is filthiness, abominable, mortal, and full of pain before *Thee*, O most blessed, bountiful, and loving Husband ; I do affect the creature more than the Creator, vanity more than eternity, and most detestable misery more than the chiefest felicity. My mind doth incline to deformity rather than beauty, to slavery rather than liberty, and to bitterness rather than sweetness. And though *the wounds of a lover be better than the kisses of a deceiver* (Prov. xxvii. 6), yet notwithstanding I do approve and affect the wounds of a deceiver more than the kisses of a lover.

2. But *do not, O Lord, remember my sins, nor the sins of my parents* (Tobias iii. 3), but rather the bowels of Thine own pity and the dolours of Thy wounds. Do not respect what I have done *to Thee*, but what Thou hast done *in me*. Do not consider what I have committed *against Thee*, but what Thou hast endured *for me*. If You *love me*, as You make show you do, why, then, do You *leave me* ? Why do You suffer me to wander up and down, and go astray ? *Detain me*, therefore, O most loving God, with Thy fear, *restrain me* with Thy love, and *sustain me* with Thy sweetness.

O most sweet Spouse, I know not, I cannot,

I will not serve Thee ; I will not adhere unto Thee, nor love Thee with all my heart—nay, scarce with the least particle of my heart. But Thou canst work *in me* what Thou desirest and requirest *of me*. What, then ? Shall *I* fail of my will, or *Thou* of *Thine* ? I beseech Thee, let not *man* prevail, but *God*. Be not wanting unto me herein, but succour me ; do not fail, but speedily come and help me. I have wasted all my substance by debauched *living*, and by too much *loving* both myself and Thy creatures.

3. But be Thou merciful and help me, that acknowledge my want and misery, and with a hunger-starved appetite return to the bowels of Thy Fatherly mercy. Oh, look upon me with the eyes of pity and compassion, and vouchsafe to shine upon me with the pleasant beams of Thy grace, and give unto me the sweet kisses of peace and quietness. I do sincerely acknowledge that with a high hand I have sinned against heaven—that is, against the whole Court of heaven and the Roman Church—yea, and against every creature and before Thee. Yea, *I have sinned against Thee alone, and done evil in Thy sight* (Ps. l. 6), and therefore *am not worthy to be called Thy son* (Luke xv. 21) ; nay, not so much as Thy hireling or servant ; no, not the vilest and worst of all Thy creatures. But be Thou merciful unto me, and *blot out all mine iniquities, that Thou mayest be justified in Thy sayings, and mayest overcome when Thou art judged : because mine*

enemies say unto my soul, There is no salvation for him in his God (Ps. iii. 3).

4. I beseech Thee, command that the best *stole* of charity be given unto me, and the *ring* of fervent faith; let my *feet*—that is, my affections—be shod with the *shoes* of a firm and lively hope, that may brace me up and confirm me more and more in Thee, and let my hungry appetite be satiated with the blood of the true fat calf, that was sacrificed for us on the Altar of the Cross. Let Thy wounds, O good Jesus, appear open unto my heart, that I may see how much Thou lovest me, and that being inebriated with Thy blood, I may be wholly resolved by love unto Thee. Let Thy dolours enter *into me*, and drive all strange love *out of me*. Let me be crucified to the world with Thee, that I may be dead, and my life may be hid only in God with Thee.

Oh true life, blessed life, happy life, which, being hidden from the world, and joined to *Christ*, art quiet in God, her centre! One thing is necessary for me, and I desire only one thing. Let, therefore, the multitude of phantasies depart from me, because I have no more than only one Beloved, one Husband, one Love, even my Lord and God *Jesus Christ*. Let nothing relish well unto me, let nothing delight me, let nothing allure me, but my Lord *Jesus Christ*; let Him be wholly mine, and me wholly His, and let my heart be one with *Christ* Himself, judging myself

to know nothing, to love nothing, to affect and desire nothing, but our Lord *Jesus Christ* and Him crucified. Receive me, therefore, O good Lord, within Thy bowels, refresh me with Thy breasts, and inebriate me with Thy wounds.

5. Rouse up thyself, O my soul, unto these tender bowels of compassion by which He wept over *Jerusalem*, over *Lazarus*, and on the *Cross*—nay, rather, in *them* over *thee*. Is it not written : *And a river went forth from the place of pleasure to water Paradise, which is divided into four heads* (Gen. ii. 10)? Certainly if a river of tears went forth from the place of pleasure and delights, how much more ought it to go forth from a place of all uncleanness? O good *Jesus*, full of all delight, wherefore didst Thou weep for me?

Rouse up thyself also, O my soul, to the words of instructions, exhortations, and praises, which thou hast from the word of eternal life. Rouse up thyself likewise to the words of reviling, mocking, and killing, to the dolours of His *Passion* and *compassion*. Consider, saith He, *and see if there be sorrow like My sorrow* (Lam. i. 12). Yea, Lord, I will do it, but I will rather consider and see if there be *love* like *Thy love*—nay, if there be any love at all besides *Thy love*. And therefore I will love nothing *but Thee, and for Thee*.

6. Thou, Lord *Jesus*, hast so exceedingly loved me, the most wicked and greatest contemner of Thee in all the world—me, I say, the vilest of all, and the very horror of worms, in that Thou

wouldst endure and suffer so much for me. And shall not I, then, so much love *Thee*, Who art infinitely good, my most merciful Father, my most sweet Husband, the original fountain of all beauty, sanctity, and delight, as to die at least to the world for *Thee*—yea, and to die even for myself, that, being wholly crucified *with Thee*, I may feel nothing *but Thee*, that so *I may live now, no more I, but Christ may live in me* (Gal. ii. 20) ?

What shall I, therefore, render to our Lord for all things that He hath rendered unto me ? I will receive the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord (Ps. cxv. 13). Let, then, this chalice of His *Passion* be continually in my body ; let this salvation of superabundant grace be rooted in my heart ; let this melody of the Divine praise be ever in my mouth. For *I will praise my Lord as long as I live : I will sing unto my God as long as I have any being* (Ps. cxlv. 1). *Let my speech be pleasing unto Him, for I will take delight in our Lord* (Ps. ciii. 34). I will be exalted, and show unto Him the visage of my mind ; there shall sound in his ears from my mouth immense thanksgiving, and the praise of His greatness.

Let, therefore, from henceforth *all old things depart from my mouth*, and out of my mind, *because our God is the Lord of all knowledge, and to Him are prepared both the thoughts and words* (1 Kings ii. 3). I will overcome the bow of the valiant, and will be girded with strength

from above. I will be glad and rejoice in our Lord alone, and my mouth shall be filled with gladness, and all my bones shall rejoice in my God ; for I will offer myself wholly to my Saviour. My heart shall rest in the sweetness of the immense goodness. I will praise the excellency of the greatest glory, and will follow the steps of His bitter *Passion*. Let my body be trodden upon, but let my heart be lifted up and my mouth be filled with praise, that it may continually day and night chant forth the greatness of my God. Casting away, therefore, O my God, all things *from me*, wholly thirsting *after Thee*, and feeling, nothing *besides Thee*, let me be resolved *into Thee*, and altogether rest *in Thee*. Let vanity depart *from me*, let thy Deity come *unto me*, and let charity transform me *into Thee*, that so I may be wholly Divine. Let *my* heart be opened, and let the wounds of *Thy* heart be opened, and let us be inwardly joined together, to the end that I may be one with *Christ*. Amen.

The Third Book

CHAPTER I

THERE BE THREE THINGS THAT BRING A MAN TO
CONTEMPLATION

1. The humiliation of himself for his sins.
2. Conformity to Christ crucified.
3. Desire of possessing God alone.

IF you would attain to the sweet repose and rest that contemplation brings to the soul, you must study to have three things rooted in you.

1. The first is, to consider how grievously you have offended your Creator, and how He is still daily offended both by you and others ; and, being heartily sorry for your own sins, and inwardly moved with compassion towards others as to your own self, shed tears in great abundance, if you can, every day that passes over your head. And as often as you shall think upon these things desire to be affected rather with grief than joy, considering that we are not here in this world as in a place of mirth, but of sorrow. For it is

no small matter if, by weeping and lamenting the whole time of our life, we can pacify our God, Whom we have so exceedingly offended by our sins. And therefore we ought to admit of no consolation so long as we are in this present life, but continually deplore the miseries and sins, as well of ourselves as of our neighbours. And then our loving and most merciful Lord, seeing us to be in so great anguish and bitterness, will dry up the current of tears in us, and pour into our souls the spirit of joy and gladness. And even as water purified in the vine, and warmed by the heat of the sun, is converted into wine, even so our imperfect tears, warmed with the fervour of contrition and charity, will be converted into the wine of gladness. For it is not decent that so noble a Lord should dwell in any house but in such a one as He shall find to be clean swept with the broom of confession, and well washed with tears of contrition.

2. The second thing is, that you endeavour as much as you can to compassionate the sufferings of *Christ*, and to bear Him everywhere with you in your heart. For unless by compassionating of Him we suffer with Him, we shall never reign with Him. But if you shall meditate well upon His *Passion*, and shall thereby enter into His side, you will quickly come into His heart. O happy heart that is so sweetly bound unto the heart of *Christ*, Whose *left hand is under His head, and His right hand embraceth him* (Cant. ii. 6 ; and viii. 3) !

because then is the husband rightly placed with his Spouse, and united to her in his chamber.

Declare, then, unto me, I pray thee, O soul, the sweetness which thou feelest ; hide not from me the delights wherewith thou aboundest. But I well see thou hearest not, because thy heart is wholly absorbed with sweetness ; thou hast *forgotten the interpreter in the prison* (Gen. xl. 23). For I see that thou art so exceedingly taken with delight and pleasure as that thou art past all sense and feeling, and canst not utter a word. And, indeed, whosoever he be that will enter into the quietness and sweetness of contemplation by any other door than this, let him repute himself a thief and a robber.

3. The third is, that you desire not to possess anything but God ; and whatsoever you shall have besides God, or whatsoever shall be offered unto you, or you shall see, or hear to be named besides Him, you ought to make no more account thereof than of so many leaves ; but fix your mind solely in God, and let it be your only endeavour to be joined to Him alone. Then will the pleasant and melodious harmony of His eloquence sound in your ears ; then will He reveal unto you the treasures of His wisdom, and give you most sweet kisses, and you will not be able to endure yourself, by reason of the abundance of delights which you shall feel ; but, casting yourself into His arms, He will inflame you with His embracings, and so

you will be altogether absorbed with the excess of sweetness.

O happy soul, whither goest thou ? Why dost thou leave us in such bitterness ? Tell us, I pray thee, whether this good is sufficient for thee or no ; or whether thou wilt that we help thee with our service or with something that we have. But I believe thou thinkest us to abound with nothing but filth, and that we have no better thing to bestow upon thee. How have we offended thee, O my soul, that art so exceedingly filled with pleasure and delight as that thou wilt not vouchsafe so much as to look upon our best and greatest things that we offer unto thee ? Wherefore dost thou condemn those things that we so much affect ? But I see, thou speakest not to us, because thou art ravished of thy beloved. O ineffable love, that thus joinest the heart to its end ! Oh, the wonderful benignity of our Saviour, Who is so singularly beneficent to them that love Him above all things !

CHAPTER II

WHAT A GLORIOUS THING IT IS TO BE CHANGED
UNTO GOD, AND HOW IT MAY BE DONE

1. What a glorious thing it is to be changed unto God.
2. How it may be done.
3. With what caution a man that is changed into God ought to live.
4. It is a marvel how he that has once tasted of God can ever be separated from Him again.

1. *Oh, the wonderful change of the right hand of the Most High* (Ps. lxxvi. 11)! For even as among men that have temporal things it would be a strange thing if one should change most filthy corruption into all the delights and honours of this world—that is to say, as that for the merest refuse he could obtain the full possession of this world, and be for temporal matters like an Emperor, and for spiritual like a Pope, and there should be nobody to contradict him in anything; and that the wicked spirits should obey him, and that not only the earth, but even also the heavens and stars, should bend at His beck and be ruled by Him; and that He could kill and make alive, and heal all sick; and that He could change the course of nature in all things; and that he had all riches and delights that can be imagined out of God—yea, all that God is able to make, yet so as they lead not to God—even so,

without comparison, that change is much more admirable, laudable, and amiable, whereby one changeth himself unto God. For there is a great deal more disproportion and distance between man and God than there is between the vilest and worst creature in all the world, and all other things, though never so excellent, that God can make out of Himself.

2. Now, a man doth then change himself unto God when he chooseth and loveth to be hated, loving God alone, and setting his affection upon nothing in all the world but only God ; caring for nothing but God alone, and wholly seeking how his Lord only may be honoured by himself and others.

O change to be desired above all other things ! For certainly he that hath it hath changed the wounds of his sins into the wounds of *Christ*, and the filthiness of his mind into the goodness of God ; *his* vileness into the Majesty of God ; *his* wickedness into the clemency of God ; the bitterness of his heart into the sweetness of his Creator. For he is wholly in God, and he seeks after nothing but God. His heart is full of God ; he puts off himself, and puts on God, and armed with the zeal of God, he makes war upon himself, as upon a most cruel enemy. If this change be so as I have said, why, then, O wicked servant, unfaithful slave, and unprofitable creature, are you slack in obtaining of the same ?

3. But take heed that you go not about it with

slothfulness of labour, grief of heart, heaviness of courage, and insensibleness of mind ; but rather with greediness of mind, fervent desire, and excessive love, especially seeing there is nothing more profitable to a man, nothing more noble, nor delightful. If, therefore, you shall go out of yourself, and after this manner enter into God, have a care that you be not in any case found out of Him. And if it shall chance that, through infirmity of mind or negligence, you do happen to go out of Him, return thither again so soon as possibly you can with tears, and humbly beseech Him that He would forgive you, and vouchsafe to receive you a fugitive servant. And then firmly resolve in your heart that you will never go forth any more from thence. My meaning is not that you should make any such purpose as may bind you to a new sin, because we are frail and inconstant. And if you shall go forth of Him a thousand times, return to Him so often again.

4. We ought greatly to wonder—yea, we ought to wonder that we cannot wonder enough—how a man that hath once tasted of God and of His sweetness can by any manner of means be ever separated from Him again. And being thus Divinely inebriated, how that He doth not forget all things in the world—yea, even to eat, drink, and sleep ; and if anything be set before him, how he can look upon any other thing than his most bountiful Lord, and be delighted in Him

with abundance of sweetness, sith he knows Him to be in all things, and that he may find Him in all things. *Oh, how good is God to Israel, to them that are of a right heart* (Ps. lxxii. 1) ! Oh, how sweet and pleasant is His Spirit in them ! Oh, with what bitterness, with what sorrow and sadness ought that person to be filled which is separated from that sweetness, even but for a moment !

CHAPTER III

HOW A MAN IN A SHORT TIME MAY COME TO BE PERFECT

1. By always ascending, and never resting.
2. If he do rest, that he do not return back to the place from whence he first ascended, but remain where he is.
3. Or if he will needs descend, that he descend to the valley of contrition and compassion.
4. The sum of this rule, and the demonstration thereof.

1. WHOSOEVER he be that will come by contemplation to the top of the mountain of God ought never to take any rest as long as he is awake, but to be always ascending by the elevation of his mind. For in this ascension not to rest is indeed truly to rest, and he that will rest shall be tired, not being able afterwards to ascend as he ought. Yea, it oftentimes falls out that, taking his rest, he is so weary as that he cannot by any

manner of means ascend any higher. For in the climbing of a material mountain, because the flesh of man is weak, there is therefore necessarily required ease and rest ; but in the climbing of this same spiritual mountain, because the spirit is prompt and willing, the contrary is required—that is to say, that the spirit do not rest, but when it begins to be weary that it ascend swifter and run faster. And by this means he will become fresher, and more eager to perform greater and higher matters, and he will seem to himself to be a great deal lighter, going forward with more sweetness, pleasure, and delight, and making it his rest not to rest at all. And therefore they are not wise, nor do well know what contemplation is, who, for to take their breath when they are weary, set them down and rest. And let them be most certainly assured that in taking of their rest they do not gather new forces, but rather lose the old. And therefore, if the mind of the contemplative person do run *swiftly*, it runs *sweetly* ; but if he do no more than go, he begins to be tired ; and if he rest himself, then he loses strength. And therefore this thing is nothing else but with the Blessed Virgin to *ascend unto the hill country with speed* (Luke i. 39).

2. And if anyone cannot reach this same, but must needs rest, and yet hath a desire still to ascend, he hath this help—namely, that although he cannot in all points fulfil those things that

have been said before, yet let him be sure that he do not materially leave the manner of ascending. For they that do materially climb up a hill, and being weary in the midst, would take their rest, they do not go down to rest at the bottom of the hill, for then they would never come to the top, and in so doing they would be counted of all men for fools. So in like manner are they to be counted fools, and will never get up to the top of contemplation, who in their contemplation ascend to-day a little, or it may be much, and, being weary, return back to take their rest to the place or state from whence they came, and think that by resting in the valley of sins and worldly vanities, or in the plains of imperfections, they are made stronger and apter for ascending, being altogether ignorant that they shall hardly be ever able to reach unto that state to which they tend. And this is the reason, as I suppose, why so few contemplative persons do reach to the height of this mountain. If, therefore, a man would get up as high as he can, and there rest, and not go back at all, and the next day go up higher, and there set the foot of his heart, and after that ascend still higher and higher, and thus do always, I say unto you that such a one would profit more in one month than another that goes back to take his rest, and returns from whence he first came would do in forty years. And I do believe that in a short time he would be perfect in his state, and would

become glorious before God, and beloved of all the Court of heaven. And if there be anything in the mountain that shall make you afraid, have recourse to the holes in the side of *Christ*.

3. And if you must needs descend down to the valley, because you were nourished there, and will not do as I have said before, yet do this at least—namely, descend to the valley of your own misery and of all mankind by humbling yourself and compassionating your neighbour, grieving as well for your own as for the sins of others, and demanding pardon of God for them. Which He grant that is blessed for evermore. Amen.

4. This short rule ensuing doth briefly comprehend all that hath been said before concerning this matter. He that by contemplation would come to the top of the hill of our Lord, let him not once stand still, nor go back, until he hath gotten as far as he intended, unless perchance he will descend to sorrow for his own sins and the sins of others. And out of doubt by how much the nearer the spirit of the contemplative draws to the increated Spirit, it is made so much the more spiritual and lively ; and by approaching near unto that eternal fire, it is more inflamed and quickened, and those forces which it lost by being absent from God are restored and renewed. And if he happen to fall, let him rest by not resting ; and by how much the more he looks into the sovereign good, and doth most clearly behold himself therein, approaching nearer and

nearer to the same, by so much the more doth he become retired from himself. Provided that on his part he make no resistance, but enforce himself thoroughly to adhere thereunto, as if he had already tasted the sweetness thereof.

CHAPTER IV

HOW A SOUL IN CONTEMPLATION IS INEBRIATED OF HER CREATOR

1. This is done by drinking abundance of wine—that is to say, by doing the will of God with great diligence.

2. God doth often hide Himself from a soul that loves Him, to the end He may be more earnestly sought after.

3. This He does so often until the soul hath learned not to depart from her God, and then she is more inebriated than before.

4. A caution for the keeping of humility in this state.

1. *O depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God : how incomprehensible are His judgments, and His ways unsearchable* (Rom. xi. 33)! *Who shall ascend into the mount of our Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place* (Ps. xxiii. 3)? But if any would ascend, which way must he go if it be so that His ways are unsearchable? Hear, O beloved soul, your beloved, and rejoice and be glad when you study to do with diligence all such things as hath been said, and to come so near unto God as that you are not able to think of anything else but of Him, and all other

things besides Him are exceeding bitter unto you, and that you would a great deal more willingly have your soul separated from your body than from the continual cogitation of your God, and that you would think you did not love yourself unless you loved yourself for His sake.

2. O soul full of love, or, rather, wholly converted into love, hear what may happen unto you concerning your Beloved. This your Beloved, from whom you cannot in any case be separated, will for a certain time withdraw Himself from your cogitation, so that your heart will begin to wander and to be busied about some other thing ; and you, seeing Him Whom you so much loved to be departed from you, being exceeding eager of Him, will look Him up and down in all places, and see if you can find Him Whom you so vehemently loved, and you will relate your miserable case to all creatures, to the end they may tell you (if they can) where your Beloved is, because you *languish with love* (Cant. ii. 5). How exceedingly will you then weep and lament, with what anxiety will you run up and down after your Beloved, I know not how to declare the same unto you. Oh the wonderful inebriation of love ! For inasmuch as you look for Him you are with Him, and know not of it. But what will your Beloved do, O thou that art filled with all love ? Can He possibly conceal Himself any longer ? Certainly no ; but your most loving Husband will presently manifest Himself

unto you ; and you, seeing Him Whom you looked for with such earnestness, will, through exceeding love, embrace Him, yet always with fear and reverence. But how great a consolation this will be unto you, if you be wise you will make trial.

3. But hear, O lover of our Lord, when you shall think yourself to be secure and sure of Him, He will then absent Himself from you again, and then you will seek for Him a great deal more earnestly than before. What shall I say unto you ? He will absent Himself from you again—yea, again and again. In brief, He will absent Himself so often from you until you be careful to keep Him, not daring to make yourself sure of Him, but to have all things ever in suspicion and doubt.

But hear, O happy soul, what your Beloved will do unto you. When you shall begin to rest with Him, then will He give unto you most pleasant wine to drink ; and you, being allured with His sweetness, will be more and more affected towards Him ; and He, Who is ever most bountiful, will give more unto you, and the more He gives you the more you will desire, and so He will still give you more. What shall I say ? You will never be satisfied until you be inebriated and filled with wine. But whether after this great and frequent inebriation you shall fall into a spiritual slumber or ecstasy, you shall make trial as our Lord will think fitting to grant

unto you ; for He is most liberal, giving a great deal more beyond all comparison than can be believed.

4. Notwithstanding, you ought to have this always in your heart, that you are most vile and no way worthy hereof—nay, you ought to esteem it as an exceeding great favour if, with the suffering of any pain in this world, be it never so great, you can obtain the forgiveness of your sins at His hands, Who is praised and glorified for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER V

THAT A MAN BEFORE ECSTASY IS DIVERSELY INEBRIATED

1. There is a double ebriety—
2. One proceeding from joy of the spirit in God,
3. Another from sweetness of the mind.
4. The first is secure, the second ought to be suspected, lest it come from the devil.
5. The manner how to use this ebriety of sweetness securely.

1. FORASMUCH as in many places of the former chapters we have said that a man may be inebriated with the Divine influence, to the end that your mind may be the more lifted up, I would not have you to be ignorant of the inebriation of these Divine influences. For you ought to understand that a contemplative person, although he have many spiritual consolations, yet before he

comes to the Divine slumber and ecstasy (to the which few attain), he shall feel a double inebriation.

2. The first is a certain abundance of joy in the heart and a vehement exultation of mind, which, after much weeping or the consideration of the *Passion of Christ*, or by an excessive fervour of singular love towards God, is introduced into the mind from a certain new influence and Divine irradiation ; and the same joy doth in such sort abound in his heart as that it doth also dilate itself into the members of the body, and makes them to be delighted in the Divine clemency, and through abundance of joy he goes reeling to and fro like a drunken man, taking rest in no place ; and being transported with the love of his Creator, he lovingly embraces all creatures that he meets. And you may well believe that he doth not much apply his heart to earthly things, but if he meet with any he reposes them all to be vain.

3. There is also another kind of inebriation, which filleth the heart with an extreme sweetness proceeding from the Divine fellowship. This cometh by the quietness of contemplation, and so exceedingly abounds in the heart as that it doth in great abundance flow into all the other members in such sort as that he doth seem to himself to be nothing but sweetness, as well within as without. And as the first inebriation made him for joy not to take any rest, so doth this, with its exceeding great sweetness, make him, on the contrary, for to take his rest. And

although it doth so much heat him as that it causeth him to sleep, yet it doth not wholly take away the use and exercise of his particular senses, but only (as it is with a drunken man) it doth not suffer them to be at liberty ; and then whatsoever he sees he will think to be full of Divine sweetness. And although the first be full of gladness and this full of sweetness, yet we must not think but that the first hath in it also sweetness and this other gladness.

4. And although it be not necessary to be doubtful of the *first*, but rather to be joyful for it, yet concerning the *second*, which consisteth in a certain admirable sweetness of heart, the safest way is to be ever doubtful, because the devil can transform himself into an Angel of light, and is wont sometimes to procure such-like things. For he desires that man should be proud, and esteem himself to be something, and would have him to enjoy such kind of delights that he may make them his rest and his end, and so by that means he may be turned away from God, which thing our Lord doth permit to happen in such sort, because there be some contemplatives that oftentimes do presume too much of themselves, contemning others, and thinking themselves to be near unto God, whenas by reason of their pride they are furthest off from Him, and therefore the devil, the father of pride, hath this power against them to deceive them with false delights.

5. For which cause diligent regard is to be had that, whensoever any such delight happens unto you, you direct and bend the whole force of your mind unto God, and that you do not suffer your heart to depart from Him ; and if you will needs delight, delight only in God. Then, if that sweetness comes from God, it ought to be enlarged and increased ; but if it proceed from the devil, it ought to be quite abolished, or at least abated. But if at any time God will vouchsafe so far to comfort you as that you (who are now filled with bitterness as well for your own sins as for the sins of others) shall enjoy those pleasures and delights, you ought to render unto Him all possible thanks you are able, and ever to stand in fear of yourself, lest you fall into presumption ; and for the humbling of your heart under this sweetness you ought to think with yourself that for some little good thing which you do at this present, and you yourself think to be a great matter, our Lord, perchance, is content to give you that for a reward and recompense, because He holds you unworthy of eternal reward.

You ought also to fear lest that most sweet and pleasant wine be an occasion of death unto you who are as yet in the fit of a spiritual ague. We ought, therefore, as long as we remain in this vale of misery, wish with all our hearts rather to suffer affliction with *Christ* crucified than to abound with all delights that are dangerous for us. And as we daily—yea, in a manner con-

tinually—sin, so ought we willingly to desire to suffer continual pain for the same sins. And as we are most vile servants to God, even so ought it to be most pleasing unto us (yea, and which we ought to desire) to be reputed of everyone most vile. And as we are made for the honour of God, so whatsoever is in me, or in others, that tends to His glory ought to be pleasing unto me, and that thing only ought to be displeasing that tends to the contrary. But concerning things that are indifferent, we ought not in any case to trouble ourselves, but refer all to the praise of God. Which He grant unto us, etc.

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE CONTEMPLATIVE OUGHT TO BE AFFECTED TOWARDS OTHERS

1. He ought to be glad for the good of his neighbour, and if he be not, then he commits three sins.
2. That he do not judge others for their defects.
3. He ought to think that God commits more to some because they are strong, and less to him because he is weak.
4. To reduce all things to the praise of the Creator.
5. For this is spiritually to judge all things.
6. How one is to be affected towards manifest sinners.
7. How towards detractors and malicious scoffers.

1. You ought, O contemplative, to wish all these aforesaid things to every man, and also most earnestly to pray for him. And when you see

any good in your neighbour you ought exceedingly to rejoice for the same—yea, although you do not see it to be in yourself. Which thing if you do not do, but are rather sorry, you commit three exceeding great evils. The first is, that you seem to hate the honour of God, which appears in the good works of your neighbour. The second is you condemn the *Passion of Christ*, Who suffered for this end, that everyone should abound in all manner of virtues. The third is, you rend and divide in sunder that charity by the which you ought to love your neighbour as yourself, and affect his good as your own.

Be careful, therefore, to love and procure all you can the good of your neighbour, and, chiefest of all, his spiritual good, and, when necessity is offered, his temporal also, and our Lord will always reward you with spiritual good things, and at last will call you to the celestial. Unto which He bring us that endured the disgraces of the Cross for us! Amen.

2. The devil, that is rooted and grounded in malice, seeing contemplative men to have their conversation in heaven, from whence he for his pride was thrown down, endeavours all he can to draw them to himself. And because he knows that he cannot overcome them in the plain and open field, he therefore seeks at least to deceive them in secret, and although he tempts the contemplative at sundry times with several sins, yet, notwithstanding, he always aims at this—

namely, to make him presume of himself, and judge others to be vicious, grounding himself upon the saying of the Apostle, to wit: *The spiritual person judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man* (1 Cor. ii. 15). But what a plague is this! What a grievous and secret death doth this bring with it! This same evil puts God to flight, and brings in most wicked presumption; it cuts in sunder brotherly charity, it makes him *that was brought up in scarlet to embrace dung* (Lam. iv. 5), it brings him that was full of spiritual gladness to slothfulness, and makes us to attribute all such things as are to be referred to God to the fraud of the devil.

3. But, O man, what does it profit you to have ascended to the top of contemplation, and now by judging of others procure to yourself a great and most fearful downfall? Set yourself, therefore, in the last and lowest place in the consideration of yourself, and then you shall not be able to fall down, and, commending all the works of God, you yourself shall be commended.

Consider, therefore, O man, that art placed in the seat of contemplation, and know how that God, having made the creature for His honour, He would give divers gifts to divers persons, to the end He might be honoured, not after one manner only, but after divers, and that His treasures might this way be manifested unto us, and that we might hereby have divers and sundry occasions of extolling His magnificence. You

ought, therefore, first of all to think that Almighty God, like unto a good master of a family that orders his house well, weighs the wisdom, ability, and goodness of His children, and according to that which He sees to be in them He commits divers charges and offices unto them, and gives them sundry dignities.

You, therefore, that give your mind to contemplation think with yourself that God, your most bountiful Father, knowing you to be unfit and unable for anything, would not have you to be busied in dangerous, difficult, and distracting businesses, but out of His mere clemency and mercy would comfort you that are thus weak and infirm by calling you to the quiet of contemplation. But seeing others to be fervent and strongly rooted in charity, He would have them to be busied in dangerous and difficult matters, and yet, nevertheless, giving them quietness *after* their labour, and no small consolation *in* their labour. If, therefore, you will consider yourself to be thus employed in spiritual exercises, and others to be busied in other matters, do not judge them, but look upon the wisdom and goodness of God in them, confessing yourself to be weak and others strong. For how can you repute yourself to be strong when, by reason of your exceeding great infirmity, you are not able to endure the softness of your bed—that is to say, the sweetness of contemplation, but, like a reed, art shaken to and fro with every wind? What would you

do if you should *work with a trowel in one hand, and with a sword in the other, to defend yourself from your enemies* (2 Esdras iv. 17)? Verily I think you would faint for very fear. Praise, therefore, your Lord God, Who hath placed such as are strong and able in hard and laborious things, and maketh those that are wise and wary to manage the businesses of the world, and those that are kind and merciful to be dispensers and distributors of temporal goods. But as for *you* (lest you should faint and perish), He would have you to rest in the quiet life of contemplation; He would not have you to search into subtle and curious matters, but to be simple, to the end you fall not into error; He would deny you all things and make you poor, lest you should prove an evil steward. Do not, therefore, exalt yourself above these and judge them, but rather exalt them, neither exclude them from such as you see to be still and quiet. For you ought to think that, like wise and good persons, they conceal their treasure which they have hidden within them, labouring in secret, and resting in public. Or else think that God doth suffer them to fall in those small and manifest things lest they be puffed up with pride for the great things which He hath given unto them.

And although you ought to do thus concerning the aforesaid things, notwithstanding, because you see them to be in danger, you that are in quietness, and so consequently in more safety, ought to

pray for them, that so you may allure and draw them to quietness also.

4. You ought, secondly, to reduce all things to the praise of the Creator, which you may do after this manner—yea, and better, too, if our Lord would vouchsafe to reveal it unto you. When you shall see some in temporal or spiritual honour, or to be placed in any dignity whatsoever, think that this is done to commend the magnificence and power of God, and therefore praise Him for the same. And when you shall see any to give their mind to learning, searching out the most hidden secrets, not only of the Creator Himself, but also of His creatures, and observing with the greatest curiosity even every little versicle written in them, know that this is to manifest the wisdom of God, and therefore in them praise the Divine wisdom. When you shall also see some to be occupied in temporal businesses, praise in them the providence of God, providing by such as they are for them that live at quiet. If you shall see any to be busied in the works of piety, praise in them the goodness of God diffusing itself unto all things. If you see any judging of others, fear the judgment of God. If you see any magistrate punishing malefactors, think upon the Divine justice. If you see any to be rigorous and severe, fear the rigour of God's justice. If you see any lawyers pleading and examining of causes, remember the examination that shall be at the day of judgment. If you shall see Superiors

to be slack in punishing, commend in them the mercy of God. If you be warm, think upon the fervent charity of God the Father towards us, by which He would have His Son to be incarnate and crucified for us all. If you be cold, labour by all means you can to pass from all heat of misery to the place of cool refreshment. And thus may you refer all things to the praise of your Maker. For there is not a creature in all the world in which you may not find matter and occasion of honouring your Creator. For even in this very thing is every creature worthy of all praise, because it is made by God and by Him preserved in its being, and in this that it is endued with being it doth wonderfully commend and set forth the knowledge and workmanship of God the Author thereof, Who is to be praised *in* it and *by* it.

5. These few examples I have set down to excite your meditation and exercise your thoughts in greater and higher matters. And this is the Divine judgment to which the Apostle would invite you in the authority aforesaid, which you most abominably did pervert. For the Apostle's meaning is not that the spiritual man should condemn or judge others, when in another place He says unto him : *Judge not before the time* (1 Cor. iv. 5). And again he saith in another place : *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant* (Rom. xiv. 4)? But his meaning is that the carnal man understands not those secrets of the

Divine wisdom, but he that is endued with a spiritual mind, as I said : he can judge—that is to say, discern the best in every creature. Therefore, judge all things—that is, discern the Divine wisdom and goodness in every creature, to the end you may glorify the Creator of all things.

6. But if you certainly, or at least probably, know anybody to be a sinner, have a care that you do not therefore *condemn* him, nor yet *commend* him, but be displeased at his sin, and compassionate as much as you can his person. Give praise also to your Lord God, Who hath withholden him from falling into greater sins, and hath also withholden *you* from committing of the like. For you ought not to make any doubt at all but if He did not preserve you from doing of evil there is not any sin in all the world, be it ever so heinous and filthy, but you would commit the same. And humbly beseech Almighty God that He would be pleased to deliver the said sinner and all others from their sins, and that He would also keep *you* from the doing of any evil. For unless you know how to compassionate the sins of others your heart will be hardened to that which is good, and, it may be, will rush headlong, without any stop or stay, into all evil. For he that by prayer or good counsel doth not faithfully procure the good of his neighbour when he can, without all doubt he is far off from God.

7. But how much further off is God, think you, from them that are delighted with detractors

and well pleased with other sinners, so as they nourish them in their wickedness and make them bold to commit the like offences again ! If, therefore, opportunity be offered, reprehend every wicked person. Or if it seem not expedient to you to do so, yet at least show your dislike against them, to the end that the sinners in some sort may be confounded. And respect no man's greatness, but repute him to be great that is near God, and to be so much the better and greater by how much the nearer he approaches unto God. For what a perversity and senselessness is it for one to stand in fear of the devil's slave, and repute him great, and, on the other side, to condemn God's adopted Son, that possesses even already the earnest of the celestial country ! This is too great a madness. From which Christ keep us, Who is God blessed for ever and ever ! Amen.

CHAPTER VII

THAT THE CONTEMPLATIVE OUGHT NOT TO
REPUTE OTHERS UNEQUAL TO HIMSELF

1. For it is a temptation of the devil.
2. Spirituality doth not consist in the labour of the body, but of the heart.
3. God will have oftentimes such as are very spiritual not to be employed in exterior labours.
4. The divers effects which the love of God works in sundry states and conditions of men.

5. The divers manners of participating of the Spirit of God.

6. How a person that lives in solitude ought to prefer another that lives in company before himself.

7. The exterior conversation is not always sufficient whereby to judge of the interior.

8. How a person that is recollected may think himself inferior to one that is much busied exteriorly.

9. And how he that converses with none but the perfect may think himself inferior to one that converses with the imperfect.

10. A comparison between the contemplative and active life.

1. THE old enemy of mankind doth never rest, but when he cannot deceive contemplative persons by making them to judge others, he goes about to bring them to this—namely, because they see themselves to profit in many good works which they do, and because they do not see others to be exercised in the selfsame works, or not to use the same solicitude, quietness, watching, or abstinence as they do, they therefore judge them to be imperfect; but rather they see them (at least, in their judgment) to be altogether idle, or to be altogether busied about temporal matters, in the which they that do thrive well in the world do often times offend.

2. But O most wicked and secret error, that judges of the interior man by the exterior conversation! for the spiritual edifice doth not so much require the labour of the body as of the heart—nay, with God the first without the

second is nothing worth, but the second without the first is of great value ; and that which is hurtful to one is oftentimes profitable to another ; and as the faces of men are divers, so are their manners of living and profiting in good.

3. And, therefore, when you see yourself to excel in good works, and others to be occupied about other matters and to be negligent in those things which you do, you ought to consider that, although they be so in public, yet, notwithstanding, in secret and in the closet of their heart, they are very well employed ; and because God doth specially love them for the sanctity of their heart, perchance He cares not to trouble them with exterior labours, to the end they may bear with such as labour as well interiorly as exteriorly.

And, therefore, for the expelling of this temptation, you ought to think in your heart, first of all, that there is no such custom in the world that the sons of kings should work every day with their hands for the earning of their living ; but that they should fare delicately, and abound in all princely delights, without taking any pains at all. For just so it is literally, that oftentimes one brother is forced to take a great deal of pains for the obtaining of some certain devotion or some interior prayer, whereas another will get the same, or the like that is a great deal better, only with converting of his mind unto God.

4. You ought, secondly, to think that that thing which you labour to have, and now do begin to taste, is in others firmly grounded, and well practised by *them*. And, perchance, this is one reason why they do not seem to be outwardly affected towards spiritual good things as you are, because the spiritual sweetness which they have lately felt doth work an alteration in them, but doth not so change them, as I verily believe they are that have been changed a long time, but doth perfect and conserve them. And when you see yourself to be in a manner melted with love and others not to be so, then ought you to think that some are melted with the fervour of love at the heat of the Sun of Justice, like as at the material sun, so as their members are not able to endure the same ; and others are dried up, not only from the waterishness of sin, but also from the very moistness of the relics of sin, and are so firmly established in good, against all evil whatsoever, that nothing is able to separate them from the love of God. Others, in like manner, are so ripe as that, as well interiorly as exteriorly, they seem to themselves to be most sweet and pleasant, and, all the bitterness of mind being destroyed, they seem to live rather in heaven than on earth. Others also do grow after the manner of trees : although they do not taste very much sweetness, yet by continual growing they wax better and better before God. Others become rotten, as do the wicked. While,

therefore, you receive in yourself any of these effects, you ought to believe that the same or a great deal more is in your brother ; and, although he do not melt through love so soon as you, yet perchance he is firmly rooted, or, it may be, he is ripe, or at least he grows in goodness, and such effects as these, it may be, are better. And certainly it must needs be that when you think you melt you wither. And, therefore, do not judge others for such things to be less perfect than yourself, but rather fear lest you be not worthy to be compared to them. For if wax, when it melts at the sun, should say to other creatures, "Ye receive no benefit at all by the sun, or, at least, not so great as I do," it were most foolish, because, although they do not melt at the sun as wax doth, yet, notwithstanding, trees by the virtue thereof do bear fruit, which is a far greater benefit.

5. You may also put the aforesaid temptation to flight after another manner. For you ought to think that, even as concerning temporal goods, we do all of us receive them from the goodness of God ; yet, this man after one manner, and that man after another. And so many men as there are—yea, so many creatures as there are—there be so many different manner of ways of receiving the goodness of God, even so is it to be believed as concerning spiritual good in reasonable creatures, for *grace profits nature*. And this diversity in

spiritual things the Apostle doth intimate when he writes to the Corinthians, for after he had said, *But I would have all men to be as myself* (1 Cor. vii. 7), he doth presently add : *But everyone hath a proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.* And so, likewise, out of divers other places you may gather the truth hereof. If, therefore, it be thus, why, then, may not others live spiritually after another manner than you do ? For some tend to God by tranquillity and rest, others by labour ; some one way, and some another ; and it doth commonly fall out that *he is the better which is reputed the worse.* Do not, therefore, judge anybody to be more imperfect than yourself if he do not do all things that you do.

6. When, also, you see your brother to converse with anybody, either with one or many, and you are alone, then you ought to think that he is perfect in charity, and therefore God is always with him, whether he be in company with his brother or alone. And because you are imperfect in the love of God, you can scarce be with your neighbour but you offend him, and you can hardly be conversant with God but of necessity you must sequester yourself from your neighbour, which thing is certainly a sign of imperfection. For the angels that are perfect in charity are as well moved towards God when they are with us and minister unto us as when they are in the empyreal heaven ; which I do not speak as though I believed

that this might be so wholly and perfectly accomplished by *us* as it is by *them* so long as we are here in the way, but that we may in some sort imitate them.

You may also in like manner think that they are sequestered from these exterior things, and are intent to God alone, and are moved with so great fervour towards Him as that for the exceeding great intention of their mind their body seems to be dissolved, and to be brought to great weakness. And, therefore, that they may recover their strength, lest they altogether faint and perish, and lest their sanctity be observed of others, they offer themselves as servants for the consolation of their neighbour, yet ever doing all things to the honour of God.

7. And therefore it is a very foolish thing to judge one's brother for every small trifle, and to repute him imperfect. For there be many nowadays very good in outward appearance, who concerning the inward man have made but little progress. And there be also many that seem in a manner dissolute in their outward behaviour, and yet in heart are most holy and great friends of God. Or else (which is worse) some are odoriferous before men, but abominable before God, receiving in this life the reward of their exterior sanctity. And some appear to men to be sinners whose interior conversation is in heaven. And yet for all this, it most commonly happens that the exterior conversation is correspondent to

the interior. And because we cannot discern between the one and the other, we ought, therefore, to judge all to be the sons of God, and ourselves to be inferior to all, unless we see manifest cause to the contrary. For concerning good persons and the eminency of their sanctity we are altogether uncertain, but concerning our own manifold wickedness we are most certain. For it is a great presumption for *me* to limit the influence of the Divine goodness towards my neighbour because all his manners and conditions are not pleasing unto me. And what can there be more mad than to square the Divine influence and will, according to my will and pleasure? Which I then do whenas I imagine *that* thing to be displeasing unto God that is not pleasing unto me.

8. When you do also see some to be busied in outward affairs, then you ought to think that they refer those things to the praise of their Creator, and that *they* are more affected in them towards God than *you* are when you rightly convert yourself to God. For it may be because they so earnestly love God that therefore they do earnestly study to find Him in all His creatures, because they believe and know Him to be not only laudable, but also very desirable in them all. And this is their great joy and gladness when they see even in the vilest and meanest things the great power, goodness, and wisdom of God to be wonderfully manifested. And, therefore,

perchance they are willingly conversant about those vile and abject things because they would not be like us, unto whom all things are hurtful. But when you think them to be idle, peradventure they are then interiorly filled with abundance of spiritual joy that cannot be uttered, although, like wise men, they conceal the same. Or else it may be because they repute themselves so vile they dare not, therefore, continually present themselves before the presence of God, but, joining themselves to them that are vile, they endeavour to reverence Him in their heart, yet so as that sometimes they contemplate Him in verity. And this may be the reason why they are always so merry when they are in company with others, because there arises in them joy for that such vile persons as they esteem themselves to be may receive consolation with them whom they judge to be the sons of God.

9. And if you say that, therefore, in regard to some, they ought to have their conversation with them that are better, I answer, that perchance they repute *them* to be better that make show of lesser sanctity. Or else, perhaps, they do not think themselves worthy to be with them, because their life is much dissonant from the conversation of them. And therefore it seems sufficient to them if they can be with such of God's children whom they can in some sort imitate. For they know that in such things as have affinity and resemblance among themselves

the passage from one to another is more easy. Or else it may be they will not be with such persons as are very perfect and eminent, for fear lest their good intention should be known.

10. You may also think that perhaps Almighty God hath ordained that they should be busied in these exterior works and be conversant with others, because it is more difficult for them to possess God in this course of life than if they remained in solitariness. And with how much the greater conflict and labour they obtain God, by so much the more are they to be commended. Who makes a doubt that, if a man occupied in the works of an active life can as perfectly enjoy God as he that lives retired in solitude, it is a great deal more praiseworthy? And certainly where there is a greater resistance there oftentimes is increased a greater force of love, and by the manifold intention or fervour of the act the substance of charity is augmented, and consequently a greater reward from thence obtained. And, therefore, when you think them to lose they gain. And whereas you esteem them to be the lowest and meanest of all upon earth, you shall find them to be exalted above you in heaven, if, at least, you come there yourself. For it is greatly to be feared lest, as humility exalts *them*, so our pride, by which we will judge all other persons, cast us down to hell.

Or else think of them that they openly show that they can perfectly serve God in such things

to which they find themselves disposed, more than to entangle themselves in things that are too high and difficult for them, and fail therein as you do. For they repute it a great matter (or at least they ought to repute it so), and very unfitting, to do anything imperfectly for so great a Lord. Or, perchance, they assay to do as well great things in private as little in public ; as well things concerning this life as the other, to the end that in all things the enemy of mankind may impugn them, and they by that means may in all things have greater cause of merit. And although they seem to you to be so very imperfect, yet perchance, they are more stirred up with one interior motion than you with many—yea, it may be, more than you with all that you have. And because you do not know this, do not, therefore, judge others to be inferior to yourself, but praise God that hath vouchsafed to join you with *them*, by whose merits, perchance, you live spiritually, or, if you do not now, it may be you shall live by them hereafter.

These things I have said to repress the temptations of the devil. And although it be so sometimes, or at least may be so, and that we must believe so of our neighbour, yet notwithstanding, to speak simply, a contemplative life doth more please *me*, and I think is more pleasing unto God too, than the active life, and a private, solitary life than a public ; and honesty is more pleasing unto *me* than dissoluteness, and, in my opinion,

these are rather to be chosen than those. For although they may be directed unto God, and are to be found in wise persons, notwithstanding, that which is nearer to the end is always to be chosen before anything else, and rather the end itself than that which tends to the end. And, therefore, although these things be in this manner, yet it is not to be doubted but such persons as have them are the one to the other as the thing *exceeding* and the *exceeded*. For some active persons have more charity and are of greater merit than some contemplatives, and so on the contrary; and some that live in public than others that lead a solitary life, and on the contrary. Yet, notwithstanding whatsoever we are, or have, as long as we can please God it will be a great matter for us, and we need care for no more, because among so great a multitude of men as there be in the world there be but a few that are acceptable to God. For which cause we ought every day to shed tears in great abundance, as well for our own selves as for them, and withal pray that God would vouchsafe to make us acceptable to Himself, or, if we be so already, that He would conserve us in grace to the end. Which thing He grant unto us Who for this end would be incarnate and crucified. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII

AGAINST THE PROUD AND SUCH AS PRESUME OF THEMSELVES

1. We have no good thing of ourselves.
2. God gives us all the good we have, and because we abuse and mar it we have no cause to boast of it.
3. Vainglory steals away the praise that is due only to God.
4. A confession of one's own vileness, and an ardent oblation of one's self to be the Spouse of God.

1. O THOU that art proud, O filthy imitator of Lucifer, dost thou think thyself to be God? Dost thou not know that all things are from God? If, then, thou professest thyself to be something, thou makest thyself God. But see further, to the end thy madness may be repressed. Is it not exceeding great folly to boast of that which is none of our own? Seeing, therefore, all things are from God, if thou boastest of anything, thou showest thyself to be a fool. And if thou dost not know this, then thou showest thyself to be blind. Hear, then, O thou mad man, if thou wilt needs boast, and not show thyself to be a fool, set aside all such things as are not thine, and then boast of the rest. And if thou shalt set aside all such things as are not thine, then thou shalt see thyself to have left just nothing. Do not, therefore, boast of anything if thou wilt not incur the name of a vain person.

2. But let us especially descend to such gifts as make us acceptable before God. Of these thou canst not boast, because thou knowest not whether thou hast them or no. Yea, if thou boastest of them, thou hast them not. But we will suppose that thou hast them ; let us see how thou canst keep them. Our most bountiful Lord God gave unto thee (that art a very traitor, and an unfaithful servant of so good a Lord) that same *justice* which now thou hast, as a most pure and unspotted robe of innocency, and thou never ceaseest to defile the same. Why, then, O thou foolish man, *dost thou glory in thy wickedness* (Ps. li. 1)? If, therefore, all evil is only from thyself, and all good from God alone, do not, then, glory in thyself, but in God. And always blush before the eyes of the Divine Majesty because of thy filthiness, seeing thou never ceaseest to sin.

3. But methinks I hear thee say, "I will not from henceforward glory in myself, yet, notwithstanding, I desire to be commended of all." But hear what I say unto thee, O thou wicked thief. Is it not a foolish thing to rob so liberal a Lord (that giveth all things in great abundance) of that thing which is most dear and precious to Him, especially when we see it is displeasing unto Him, and know that He cannot endure the wrong? Such a fool is he that seeks to be praised of man. And, therefore, seeing that God made all things for Himself, you ought to refer

all praises and all things that are praiseworthy to the honour of your God. And seriously think with yourself that you are created and redeemed for this end and purpose, that not *you* but *God* may be commended in all your works. Execute, therefore, faithfully the will of your God, and abhor your own praises, but rejoice when God is exalted with praises of everyone. And by how much the more He is commended of any let your joy be so much the greater, and study all you can at all times to honour your God in thought, word, and deed, and be always actually intent to His praises alone. For if you did well love your Lord God, and did desire His honour as you ought to do, you would rather be continually fed with the most bitter things in this world and choose to be reputed of all men for an arrant fool, yea, and to be abhorred, than to abound with delights, and to be praised of all men, or enjoy any corporal pleasure whatsoever, if your God would thereby be more praised in you. And supposing that the reward to both these were equal and alike, we ought to esteem it as an exceeding great favour that our Most High God will vouchsafe to receive *of us* and *from us* any small gifts of praise and thanksgiving. But by reason of our imbecility and misery we do all the day long strive to do the contrary.

4. O admirable, ineffable, and amiable clemency of our Saviour, that so lovingly condescends to our miseries ! Who is able condignly to express

the same? O man, involve thyself all over within His mercy, and being ravished with admiration never cease to give thanks to so sweet a Lord.

But, O my Lord, what have I given *unto* Thee, or done *for* Thee, that Thou dost so lovingly entreat me and make so much of me that am so proud and arrogant? What favour is this that I have found that Thou endurest me in Thy presence for a moment? Certainly I have not deserved it, but rather to dwell with the wild beasts; nay, good *Jesus*, I do not deserve to be named so much as Thy creature. What shall I do unto Thee for all these things? O immense goodness, what can I render unto Thee for these so great benefits? I know not how to satisfy Thee for my sins, nor how to be grateful to Thee for Thy benefits, for I cannot give Thee anything but that which is Thine own. But I know what I will do. I will offer myself wholly *unto* Thee, and cast myself wholly *into* Thee, and being always full of fear and shamefastness I will yield unto Thee all possible reverence I am able. And if Thou wilt graciously deign to accept of my service, I will always most faithfully serve Thee. And although this be but a small matter, yet I do not doubt but Thou wilt approve of it, because I have done as much as I was able to do. But above all, I shall hold it for a very great favour if Thou wilt vouchsafe me a resting-place with Thee in Thy *floor* (Ruth iii. 4). Oh, how pleasant would Thy good presence be, then,

unto me ! I will approach with a silence, and *uncover Thy feet*, to the end Thou mayest join *me*, that am a stranger, in marriage with *Thee*. Certainly I will never be quiet until such time as I enjoy Thy embracings, and being with unspeakable pleasure and sweetness lulled asleep, I may securely rest in Thy arms. Then shall I flow with delights, and my heart will be enlarged and filled with admiration. And I, through the enjoying of so wonderful a sweetness, shall not be able to think of anything else but Thee. And I beseech Thee, O loving Lord, that Thou wouldst not at any time leave me to myself, for I am a wicked destroyer and consumer of mine own soul. All such things as Thou art pleased to bestow *upon* me conserve *in* me. To Thee alone be all honour and glory. Amen.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF SUCH AS ARE TRULY OBEDIENT

1. Of the small number of such as are truly obedient.
2. We will not obey our Superiors, but would have them rather to obey us.
3. Christ and all Saints have done the contrary.
4. True obedience is the truest liberty.
5. What kind of bondage it is that we are to shun.

1. *Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to mine eyes* (Jer. ix. 1), that I may deplore the state of the perfect brought even to nothing ?

For the earth that was filled with the Divine counsels and the examples of *Christ*, in lieu of good corn, brings forth thorns and thistles. Certainly by how much the more noble and excellent that thing is which is lost, by so much the greater ought the sorrow to be for the same. But among many things that present themselves to our consideration let us see concerning *obedience* as the foundation of Religion.

Ho ! run up and down, and see whether or no you can find it in any person in its right perfection ; and I believe you shall very hardly, or not at all, find it anywhere. But it is wonderful that, notwithstanding religions and religious persons are multiplied, yet the perfection of *obedience* is to be found in few or none. Certainly, although *our nation be multiplied*, yet *our spiritual joy is not* very much *magnified* (Isa. ix. 3).

2. Tell me, I pray you, where is that person that would have a superior to command him, and not rather to serve him ? Will we submit ourselves to the wills of our Prelates ? Surely no. But we rather desire to have our own wills fulfilled in all things. And if we want anything we murmur against them, more than gentlemen do against their servants, not sparing to wound them with the sword of our tongue. And (which is worse) *that* which we would accept and take in good part coming from another, because it comes from our Superior, it is sometimes odious unto us. We do not nowadays think how we

may wholly fulfil *their* wills, and perfectly deny *our own*, but how we may in all things resist them, and constrain them to do what we desire, and frame excuses for the refusing to do what they enjoin us, and by some means or other to hide ourselves from their sight, or else we search with all diligence for starting-holes whereby we may avoid *obedience* to them in something or other.

3. But woe be to thee, O thou imp of Lucifer, that wouldst rather command than obey, and more willingly be *above* than *under*. I fear lest for that cause we shall be forced to have our habitation with *him*, and that *Christ*, for our confusion, will appear in the same manner as He suffered, Who for our sakes would be obedient to His Father even unto death, reserving to Himself nothing of all those things which man's proper will is wont to desire. For He wholly emptied Himself of all that He had. Him did our ancient Fathers imitate, who, when they were Prelates and Superiors, made themselves subject to their subjects and inferiors; which thing was sweet, delightful, and most pleasing unto them—namely, to obey those that were under them in such things as were most contrary to their own wills, and in those things that belonged to the confusion, affliction, and perfect mortification of the exterior man. For they did not curiously and exactly weigh, as in a pair of scales, whether *this* thing were better than *that*, or whether *this* thing

were more secure or more praiseworthy, as they do that desire to avoid the doing of the same. But all things that were not against God, though they were never so difficult or base, so long as they saw them to be the will of their Superiors, they did them with the greatest earnestness that might be. For so great in them was the love of *obedience* as that for the performing the same they feared not to walk upon the waters, nor to seize upon the most fierce and savage wild beasts if they were bidden to do it. And many other such-like things they did which I am not able to reckon. Neither did that person judge *obedience* to be an unprofitable thing, who, in *obedience* to his Abbot, watered a dry and withered stick of wood for a whole year together; in which act of his appeared the sublime dignity of *obedience*; for that which was dead and withered, by the virtue and merit of *obedience*, took root and brought forth fruit.

Why, then, do we boast of our *obedience*, and are not rather confounded for our pride? Is there any reason why we should be called contemplatives? I fear we deserve not to be called so much as Christians, but rather imitators of Lucifer, and altogether devilish. For how can he be said to be a Christian that doth things directly contrary to *Christ*? Did *Christ* consider Himself to be God, and how that, according to His humanity, He was replenished with all grace and knowledge—yea, and according to His soul, already

blessed ? No ; but notwithstanding all this He was *subject to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph* (Luke ii. 51). Yea, in paying of tribute He would also show His *obedience* (Matt. xvii. 26) to them that were the servants of the devil. But we are sepulchres painted over with hypocrisy, full of dead men's bones, appearing outwardly to men to be dead, whereas inwardly we live and grow great with pride.

4. And for the excusing of our disobedience we allege and say that *we are not called* to servitude but to *liberty*, not knowing that to obey and to serve God in this servitude of obedience is to reign. For by how much the more we subject ourselves to the yoke of obedience, by so much the more honour we are worthy of. For obedience doth not only make us kings in the next world, but even in this (if it be perfectly practised) it makes us to have dominion over all creatures ; it reduces us to our ancient state and dignity, and suffers nothing to molest us but what is contrary to the profit of our soul. It makes adversity to be prosperous unto us, and it makes a man remaining in his mortal body to live like an Angel, and with great fervour to desire the honour of his Lord, and, setting all things aside, it makes him to seek *His* praise in every creature, even, with exceeding greediness, and suffers him not to live so much as a moment out of the service of God.

5. O wonderful virtue that makes man to forget

himself, and always to tend towards his Redeemer, and makes a man yet living on earth to dwell in heaven. Why, then, O thou proud man, dost thou murmur against obedience? For when the Apostle says that *we are not called to servitude*, his meaning is that we ought not to obey God nor our Superiors with a servile fear after the manner of servants, but with a filial and free fear like children; which is as much as if he had said that from henceforward we ought not to do our own proper wills. For when our Lord *Jesus Christ* says: *He that will come after Me* (Matt. xvi. 24), He doth not add, "Let him follow his own will," but He says: *Let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me*. And the whole sacred Scripture, as well old as new, doth command obedience. For if you were not proud you would not refuse to obey God as well in Himself as in any Superior whatsoever, be he never so vile or base, but rather would think scorn to subject your soul, that is so noble, to any base creature.

But it is a wonderful thing that a man should disdain to serve God in his Superior, and doth not disdain to serve a free man, or some other most base creature, but strives to spend all his time about just nothing. And therefore the poor solitary man, if he saw that he offended God more than any other, and did behave himself proudly against his Lord, by doing his own will in revenge of God and himself, he would strive to deny himself in all things, and, abhorring himself,

would be trampled upon by everyone, yet ever referring all things to the honour of his God. Which thing He grant unto us Who, willing to obey His Father, was crucified for the redemption of us. Amen.

CHAPTER X

THAT TEMPTATIONS ARE PROFITABLE FOR THE SERVANTS OF GOD

1. Temptations make us have recourse to God.
2. How this recourse may be easily made : First, by the wounds of Christ.
3. Secondly, by flying to the Mother of God.
4. Thirdly, by being confounded for our sins.

1. O MOST High God, and of wonderful benignity, Who sufferest us to be tempted, not that Thou mayest catch us and destroy us, but to the end that we, being afraid, may fly unto Thee as a most safe and sure haven. Thou dost herein like a good mother, O Lord, who, seeing her little son to be far off from her, makes him afraid with some strange and terrible thing, whereupon, for fear, he comes running as fast as he can towards her. And she, seeing him to be afraid, stretches forth her arms, and receives him with joy and gladness ; she smiles upon him, and, sweetly kissing him, bids him take heed of going from her another time, lest the like evil happen again unto him ; and holding him fast within her arms, she com-

forts him, and, last of all, gives him her breast to suck. O happy temptation that makes us fly for succour into the arms of God ! Oh, how sweet art Thou, O Lord, Who, though Thou permittest us to be vehemently chased, and to be frightened on every side, yet offerest Thyself unto us as a most safe and sure Sanctuary, to Whom we may fly, and with Whom we may remain at all times !

Do not, therefore, wonder, O man, that thou hast temptations ; but when thou art frightened with them fly unto God, and there abide with Him if thou wilt not be tempted, for fear lest thou be taken and overcome with the temptation and be damned.

2. But if you shall find yourself to be too far off from God, and that you cannot with full confidence fly unto Him, then make haste unto *Christ*, Who is near unto you, and hide yourself in the wound of His side ; and when you are in, stop the hole with a cloth, and do not fear, for the enemy shall not be able to find you out. And take this always for a general rule, that *whensoever you would incline God unto you, by making Him propitious and favourable unto you, bear in your heart the wounds of Christ, and being sprinkled with His Blood, present yourself to the Father as His only-begotten son, and He, like a most sweet and loving Father, will take you into His protection, and sufficiently provide for you.* Come, therefore, unto *Christ*, and humbly beseech Him that,

forasmuch as it is not convenient for Him to be wounded again, He will vouchsafe to imprint His wounds in your body, and make you red all over with the blood of them. And having thus put on the purple garment of His wounds, you may enter into the palace of the King.

O thou that art tempted, meditate upon these wounds, and thou shalt ever find them to be a great refreshment and consolation unto you. Do not doubt but if you shall soundly imprint them in your heart temptations will find no way into you. Who is he that, seeing the Lord of glory to be so grievously wounded for our sins, dares be so hardy as to commit new sins again? And if for very reverence and compassion of these wounds he will not leave sinning, yet at least, because he sees that a more grievous punishment in all things beyond comparison is due unto a sinner than to one that is altogether innocent, he ought to be afraid and to abstain from sin.

3. And if you shall see *Christ* to be offended with you for your sins, have recourse to the hope of all sinners—His Mother, I mean; and give unto her such respect and reverence as is due unto the Mother of God, and with abundance of tears demand her help. And if without ceasing you shall persevere in praying unto her, do not doubt but you shall obtain whatsoever you can desire. For mercy hath ever grown up together with her, and it is committed unto her in charge as

her office to satisfy for miserable sinners. And be sure you do this with great diligence, for what she doth generally and in common for all she cannot deny unto you.

4. But if you can no way receive any consolation, know that God loves you, and that He doth this to make you acknowledge the enormity of your sins, and that you should not be ignorant of your misery. Which thing is a special gift and favour of God. For He is not well pleased with the presumption of some persons that repute themselves to be just, and come unto the Most High God as to their familiar friend. But His will is that a man (although he be never so great) repute himself to be miserable, and no whit better than just nothing, and that he come unto Him with confusion of His sins, and with great reverence and fear. And that he repute it a great favour—yea, the greatest that can be imagined or conferred upon him (though he be never so great a person)—if Almighty God do vouchsafe so much as to look upon him afar off. Let him, therefore, sincerely and heartily acknowledge the greatness of God and his own littleness, and say : “Lord, I am not only unworthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but also much more unworthy to approach in any sort near unto Thee. It is enough for me that Thou wilt vouchsafe to look upon me with the eyes of pity, even, afar off.” I dare be bold to say that if thou continuest herein without resting He will not only look

upon thee, but will also bring thee into the most inward and secret places that He hath. Which He vouchsafe unto us Who is blessed for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER XI

THAT THE TEMPTATION CONCERNING OUR PRE- DESTINATION OUGHT TO BE REPRESSED

1. It is repressed first by telling the devil we will do our endeavour to enjoy God at least in this life ;
2. And firmly adhere unto Him.
3. Secondly, by hiding ourselves in the wounds of Christ.
4. Thirdly, by the intercession of our Blessed Lady.
5. Such as are to live in heaven hereafter ought to live a heavenly life here on earth.

1. IF any cogitation concerning thy predestination or foreknowledge of God do invade and trouble thee, when the devil proposes the same unto thee answer him in this manner : “ Whatsoever shall become of *me* hereafter, concerning *thee* it is most certain that thou art already damned. But if I be ordained to reprobation, and shall not enjoy God after this life, I will use all the means I can that I may have Him at least, and possess Him as much as may be, in this present life ; to the end, I want not so great a good both *here* and *hereafter* too. For henceforward, therefore, I will not omit one moment of time, but to the uttermost of my

power I will enjoy Him, and with great gladness always be delighted in Him, sith after this life is ended I must remain in perpetual misery and torment."

Were it not the greatest madness in the world for me, if I certainly knew that I should be tormented in eternal flames of hell-fire, to yield up myself to mine enemy in *this* life, and even *now* to begin to have my conversation with the devil? Is not the misery that I shall *then* feel sufficient for me but that also I must voluntarily make myself miserable before my time? Nay, verily, I will rather wholly give and dedicate myself (as far as possibly I can) to my God, more than they that are to be saved, so as there be nothing in me, neither heart, nor tongue, nor any other member whatsoever, but shall be continually exercised and employed for the service of my God, to the end that, at least for so *long* as I can, I may enjoy so great a good. For as secular persons who because they may not eat flesh in Lent will therefore have abundance thereof at Shrovetide, even so ought that person to do in respect of God that were certain of his damnation; and this thing he should especially do—namely, having once tasted how sweet God is, he should repute all other things to be as wormwood.

2. But to what state and place soever God hath ordained me it makes no matter: this I know, and am sure of, that He cannot deny

Himself. I will, therefore, embrace Him with all my heart, and with all that is within me, and will hold Him so fast and close unto me as that, although *the break of day appear, I will not let Him go unless He bless me* (Gen. xxxii. 26). And if He do bless me, I will not then part with Him, nor let Him go from me. For it is lawful for me to use violence unto Him in this case, when as He Himself commends them that *take the kingdom of heaven by force or violence* (Matt. xi. 12).

3. Or else, if I cannot do this, I know what I will do : I will go and hide myself in the caverns of His wounds, and there remain quietly ; out of which place nobody shall ever find me, neither will it be decent for Himself to put me out from thence Who says, *Him that cometh to me, I will not cast forth* (John vi. 37). And therefore he cannot damn me unless He will condemn Himself of falsehood and injustice.

4. Or, if I cannot prevail these ways, I will prostrate myself at the feet of His Blessed Mother ; and to the end she may obtain pardon for me, I will allege that she is made the Mother of God for sinners. I will earnestly implore her help, and will not suffer myself to be driven away from her, because she is proclaimed by all to be the fountain of pity and mercy. For she knows *not* what it means *not to show mercy*, neither did she ever know how to be cruel and hard-hearted towards miserable sinners, but would ever satisfy

their desires ; and I do not believe that now, for my sake, she will learn a new lesson ; and, therefore, out of great compassion *towards* me, she will appear miserable *with* me (if I may say so) before her Son, and will incline Him to be merciful *to* me. And thus have I a threefold refuge, which, like a *threefold cord*, will not easily be broken (Eccles. iv. 12).

5. But if I be predestinated to life, and shall possess the everlasting country with the Angels, then certainly I ought even now to lead an angelical and not a mere human life. I owe all myself to Him that hath prepared Himself for my reward, and being content with His portion, I ought henceforward to affect nothing else ; for He is just, and, therefore, if I should seek after any other thing besides Himself, He might justly be angry with me ; and whom before I saw to be loving and gentle, I should afterwards see enraged and ready to pronounce sentence against me.

And in the end of all, conclude and say thus to the devil : “ Whatsoever shall become of me hereafter, for the present I will never cease to serve God ; and woe be to thee that canst not serve so great a Lord, and be delighted with His most sweet presence.”

CHAPTER XII

A COMPLAINT THAT THE FLESH MAKES TO GOD THE
FATHER AGAINST CHRIST

1. The flesh complains that the soul, being allured by the flatteries of Christ, leaves her.
2. The soul joined to Christ leaves and afflicts her flesh.
3. The delights of the soul that adheres to Christ.
4. God the Father answers the flesh, that the soul doth deservedly leave her for Christ ;
5. And that it is for the great benefit of the flesh.

1. HEAR the flesh against the Spirit lifted up in contemplation, or, rather, against *Christ* Himself lifting up the soul.

The flesh saith : I complain unto Thee, O God the Father, most just and of infinite mercy, against Thy Son, desiring that Thy justice may consider the wrong done unto me, and that Thy mercy may condescend unto my misery. That same Son of Thine, full of knowledge and power, by His wisdom hath circumvented me, and by His power hath done me violence—that Son of Thine, I say, hath by His wisdom hid Himself under flesh like unto me, and by His exceeding great humility and unspeakable benignity hath craftily entered in unto me. He was more humble than any, more despised than any ; He took upon Him the necessities and wants of all, He bore the infirmities of all, He

would be most cruelly crucified for all, He would suffer affliction as well by reason of His *compassion* as by reason of His most grievous death and *Passion*; He would show the love of His heart by the opening of His side, from whence He would have the Sacraments to flow for our remedy. What needs any more? He appointed His flesh to be our meat, His blood to be our drink, and promised Himself for our reward, and called them that followed Thy precepts His *Mother* and *brethren* (Matt. xii. 49). And, last of all, He promised that He would *gird Himself and minister unto them* that sit and eat at Thy table, not only in this life, but even in heaven also.

2. By all these ways, and divers other which I do not know, neither am I able to write, hath He not only exceedingly allured and enticed my soul (which Thou gavest me) away from me, but also entering into the same, hath by His power and virtue in such sort withdrawn the same from me, and by His flattering speeches hath so joined her to Himself as that now she cares no more for me, but rather, on the contrary, afflicts, torments, and despises me, and makes no reckoning at all of me, and that which doth most of all grieve me, she loves them that do the same unto me, and in special manner prays for them, and, in case these *afflictions* be not *inflicted* upon me, she earnestly desires that they may be. And thus am I mortified, and she cares not for

it ; I lay in the dirt, and she rejoices at me. But what is more, she adds sorrow to my sorrow, and desires also that I may still have more and more sorrow ; and it is her glory and rejoicing to procure unto me all manner of injuries, contumelies, and whatsoever can be imagined to be most vile and base ; and thus doth she leave me desolate and afflicted. But she herself will always remain with Thy Son ; she will be fed with His flesh, she will be inebriated with His blood, and wheresoever *He* is she will abide with *Him*.

3. Sometimes she is with Him little and humble in the manger, sometimes she is embraced with Him in the arms of the Blessed Virgin ; she is carried with Him in her arms and fed with her milk. Sometimes, again, she is hungry with Him ; sometimes she is spit upon with Him, she is wounded with Him, crucified with Him ; and sometimes she is also comforted in heaven with Him. Wheresoever He goes she goes with Him ; she by her good-will would never be from Him, and she can go no whither without Him.

What shall I say, O Blessed Father, unto Thee concerning Thy Son, that hath thus by His love inebriated my soul, which Thou gavest unto me, and hath thus alienated the same from me ? If He hath committed robbery, command Him to make restitution, for it doth not seem a small matter unto me violently to steal away a soul after this manner.

It may seem strange why that soul which was

given unto me loves Thy Son only, and so much hates me. Why doth she forsake all things, being so absorbed with the love of Thy Son? She goes up and down without any sense or feeling. She now hears nothing else, she thinks of nothing else, she tastes and smells nothing else but *Him*, and, if she might have her will, she would be ever betwixt His arms. *There* she is merry, *there* she is pleasant, *there* she abounds with all delights, *there* she takes her rest, being inebriated with excessive love. And, indeed, it is no wonder if this my soul be so much addicted and affected to Thy Son. For unless she were more hard than a stone, and more senseless than iron, from the time that Thy Son hath done so much for her she cannot possibly do any otherwise. And where is there any stone so hard which, with the heat of so great love, would not be broken in sunder—nay, would not be wholly dissolved and melted like wax, if all the aforesaid things were done unto it? And, therefore, I do not complain against *her*, O most bountiful Father, for *she* did no more than in duty she ought to have done, but against Thy Son, Who hath so exceedingly allured her by His benefits, and left me in so great misery as now I am in.

4. Attend and hear what the most merciful Father answers to the flesh.

Because (saith He) you are My creature, I will therefore show you justice with mercy. Whereas you were made to be servant of the soul, you

would, notwithstanding, always dominate over her, and ever carried yourself inordinately towards her ; you made her to serve *you*, and not *me* ; you made her prone to follow all manner of evil, and (that is worse) you made her that was created after my image to be subject to the devil's slavery and bondage ; you made her worse than the very beasts, and by your means she became so abominable as that I would not endure her ; you made her more black than darkness itself, and so strangely altered her, as that I could not know her to be My creature. And because I did so exceedingly love *her* that was in this flesh, it was therefore necessary for My Son to be incarnate and made Flesh, to the end He might allure her back again to *Mine* and *His* love. And because the soul by being *with you* and *within you*, her body was dead, I would, therefore, for the quickening of *you*, have My Son to be incarnate and crucified *for you*.

Neither was this any cozenage or deceit in My Son, but *Mine* and *His* ineffable mercy. And because thou, O flesh, from the very beginning that the soul was infused into thee, hast done wickedly ; but My Son, burning with excessive love towards your soul, gave Himself wholly for her. My justice, therefore, doth require that I do altogether let her alone, and wholly leave her to herself to do what she pleases, and that she do abhor thee, and desire also that thou mayest be so abhorred of all.

5. But because thou didst not only demand justice, but also desiredst mercy, My will and pleasure is that thou beest also partaker even in this life of that joy and sweetness which the soul feels in My Son, and in the life to come I will enrich thee with a most ample and perfect reward of blessedness. And if thou shalt be obedient to the soul I absolve thee from this time forward, not only from eternal pain, but also from purgatory, Who do live for ever and ever.

CHAPTER XIII

A MEDITATION UPON THE "AVE MARIA"

1. It is a most singular benefit that, of all the world, only Catholics can salute the Blessed Virgin with profit.
2. Notwithstanding that they be sinners.
3. The Blessed Virgin is to be saluted with great reverence and devotion.
4. The wonderful efficacy of this Hail.
5. The name of Mary is full of all sweetness.
6. The etymology of Mary.

1. *Hail, Mary, full of grace, our Lord is with thee.* I render unto Thee, O Lord God, all possible thanks that I am able, from the most profound and secret corners of my heart, who for us unworthy wretches didst vouchsafe to assume our nature, and to remain within the Virgin's womb, and to be born of her, to be fed with her milk, nourished in her lap, and to be subject to her

rule and government, Thou that conservest and governest all things. And hast vouchsafed in such wise to illuminate me (that am most filthy corruption, and detestable loathsomeness, full of all abomination, and altogether unworthy of any life or being), as that I know Thou hadst a Mother, and hast likewise permitted me, a most unworthy caitiff, to be so bold as to salute her. For *Thou hast not done so to every nation* (Ps. cxlvii. 20), and this so great a benefit *Thou hast not manifested to them.*

Where, O Lord, is that peculiar people which, *with a mighty hand and lofty arm* (Ps. cxxxv. 12), Thou didst bring out of the land of Egypt, through the desert, into the land of promise, with so many great signs and wonders of Thy power and magnificence? Is not this the people, O Lord, to whom Thou hast promised this benefit? Why, then, hast Thou not reserved this, Thy so great and incomparable benefit for *them*, the worshippers of Thee, but for *us* Idolaters and Infidels? Why hast Thou revealed the same unto *us* that are so small a number, when as many, yea, infinite people besides, know it not? Art not Thou, O Lord, the Creator of all, that hast made all men according to Thine own image?

2. But are not men wont to reveal their secrets to their intimate friends? Why, then, O Lord, dost Thou disclose Thy mysteries to Thine enemies, and above all to *me*, who from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot am infected,

and am wholly bent to those things that are contrary to Thy will? Why hast Thou given so noble a gift and such an excellent treasure to Thy most unfaithful and wicked servant? Art Thou ignorant, O Lord, that I do not honour, but rather mock and deride, Thy Mother, whenas I that am proud do presume to salute her that is humble; I that am most proud of all, and she most humble of all; I that am most impure, she that is most pure and chaste; I that am most vain and earthly, she that is most heavenly and Divine; I that am most wicked, she that is most holy; I that am the child of the devil, she that is the Mother of God? Where is now, O good Lord, that reverence which is due unto Thy Mother? Why dost Thou suffer such vile persons as I am to salute her? But, O most pitiful *Jesus*, Thou, out of Thy excessive charity towards us, didst not hold it sufficient only for Thee to submit Thyself to all derision and contempt for our sakes, but Thou dost also now permit Thy blessed Mother sitting at Thy right hand to be named and uttered with impure lips, to the end Thou mayest inflame our hearts with the love of Thee and her.

Neither is there any doubt to be made but that we are most unworthy. And I do verily believe that there is never an Angel in heaven that is able to salute her as she deserves; how much more unworthy am I that am so impure a creature?

3. It ought to seem strange that miserable man

doth not tremble and fear to salute so great a Lady. But it is a most detestable thing that any dare name her with their mouths, and have their hearts busied about vain, unprofitable, and wicked things, and will speak unto her with their faces turned from her. For this most blessed Virgin is to be saluted with all reverence, honour, and devotion, and she desires to have such as accost her to do it reverently and devoutly. Them she loves, them she cherishes, and them she admits to be her children. Blessed is that person that is glad for having so noble a Mother, that embraces her with all his heart, and imitates her in his actions. Oh, how happy is ~~he~~ that strives all he can to be conformable to the Mother of God! This certainly is he that, contemning all creatures, with singular love and affection adheres to God alone, and being crucified with *Christ* thirsts after the salvation of souls. Surely it is a most wonderful thing that the heart of him that salutes such a Virgin is not ravished with excessive joy. He speaks to the Mother of God, and withal contemplates how God was made man of her. He sees that for his sake low things are inseparably joined together with high things, and high things with low things. How, I pray, is it possible that our heart doth not melt with this salutation where we see that God so loved us as that He vouchsafed to be incarnate in the Virgin's womb, and by that means to become our brother? For he is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

O admirable and ineffable diffusion of the Divine goodness ! With what great devotion ought our heart to be enlarged towards such a Virgin, by whom we deserved to have so great a diffusion of the Divine goodness upon us, and by whom we deserved to be the brethren of God Himself, and coheirs with Him in His kingdom ! Certainly our mouth ought to be filled with wonderful sweetness when we salute so sweet and debonair a Lady, and when we bless *the fruit of her womb*. For this her *fruit* is most sweet and pleasant, and doth sweetly relish in the mouth and heart of everyone that is wise.

Oh, how wonderful is the fruitfulness of this Virgin, who, when she is saluted devoutly, doth cause her most sweet *fruit* to flow in the heart of the Saluter ! For by how much the more anyone doth take pleasure in this her *fruit* so much the more he obtaineth of her. And unless he say that he has enough, she will never leave giving. O admirable Lady, it is strange that we are not so much delighted in saluting of thee as that for thee and thy *fruit* we forget all things else ! How comes it to pass, I pray, that man is not so intentive towards thee as that for thy exceeding great sweetness he goes beside himself not knowing what he does ? O thou ravisher of hearts and devourer of souls ! . . . Why dost thou fill heaven with dirt, and makest men that are most vain to become Divine ? Why, I pray, dost thou inebriate us with the love of thy Son

when we are not able to make thee any requital for the same? What profit is it to thee, O lover of souls, that we love thee and thy Son? Are not such things as are in heaven *with* thee sufficient *for* thee? Why dost thou require earthly hearts that are most vile and filthy? Receive us, therefore, unto thee, O thou that huntest after souls, and nourish us in the bosom of thy grace. For who can escape the fulgor of thy clearness and the bright beams of thy pity? Certainly *there is none that can hide himself from thy heat* (Ps. xviii. 7), because heaven and earth are full of thy benefits. For whithersoever we go we meet with the diffusion of thy virginal *womb*. Behold, therefore, thou hast ensnared us on every side with thy benefits, and hast at all times and in every place laid the nets of thy benignity and mercy to catch us, so as we cannot in reason fly away from thee that art so sweet a Mother, but we must be forced always to rest in the lap of thy sweetness. Run, therefore, most dear brethren, from all places, and let us salute this so noble and sweet a Virgin.

4. *Hail!* Have patience with me, O Blessed Lady, for that I utter the Angelical Salutation, and have not an Angelical, but rather a Diabolical life and conversation. I deserve to be abhorred of all, and yet I presume to salute thee. But I put my confidence, O most sweet Lady, in thy excessive bounty, and being inflamed with thy love, although I am too, too unworthy, yet I do

not fear to salute thee, saying, *Hail!* What is more sweet unto me, O Lady, than this thy *Hail*? O most wonderful *Hail*, with which a certain celestial sweetness inebriates the devout heart! Certainly he that devoutly utters the same may say: My soul melted within me so soon as I saluted my Lady. My heart and my flesh faint while I speak to my Lady. For who is there that doth not faint in thee, O sacred Virgin, when he sees thee after this Salutation to become with child with the Son of God? What man doth not faint that sees the Son of God to be carried in thy *womb*, and to be fed with thy milk? What is there, O Blessed Lady, that thou dost more willingly hear than this Salutation, by which thou art known to be the Mother of God? Yet thy will is that men be so delighted in thee as that their affection be principally towards *Him* whose Mother thou art. For I do not think that thou wouldst be saluted or known otherwise than as the Mother of God. Thou art the Crystal gate, who wouldst have us to enter in by thee unto thy Son. *Hail*, therefore, and truly *Hail!* For this thy *Hail* hath opened our heart. O wonderful and more than wonderful *Hail*, by which the devils are put to flight, sinners set at liberty, and God's children are delighted. By which an Angel greets, the Word is incarnate, and a Virgin is gotten with child! O admirable *Hail*, by virtue of which the creatures are renewed, man redeemed, and Angels repaired! Let, there-

fore, every creature without ceasing say unto thee this *Hail*. O most sweet and pleasant *Hail*, by which terrestrial creatures are made glad, and celestial do rejoice! O *Hail*, that *illuminates* the understanding, *satiates* the affection, and *elevates* the mind to heaven; by which the mind is illustrated, the heart sweetened, and the flesh macerated, and therefore *Hail*! O combining *Hail*, that links the heart of man to the Virgin, and separates it from earthly cogitations; that joins misery to mercy, a servant to his mistress, and a son to his mother! O amiable *Hail*! Let *him* come hither, and say this word of salutation that will be linked in love, and after he hath heartily saluted he will be more strongly linked, and by how much the more strongly he is linked by so much the more willingly he will salute. And thus will love and the *Hail* mutually increase one another until the heart of the Saluter do faint with sweetness. O loving Virgin, that makest him that loves thee to become Divine, and him that through much filthiness is polluted to be as clean and pure as a virgin! *Hail*, therefore, O my Lady, my Mother, yea, my heart and my soul, O Virgin *Mary*, yea, thou that art my *Mary*, *Hail*!

5. O most sweet name, most pleasant name, most delightful name, the name of *Mary*! What have I done? How far have I presumed? How bold have I been to name thee? Who hath ever heard the like, that the son of perdition, a sack

of sin, and the devil's slave, dare presume to name thee? O my love! Certainly the greatest love that is knows not how to reverence the name of the Mother of God sufficiently. Pardon me, O Blessed Lady, that I say I love thee. For howsoever I be not worthy to love *thee*, yet thou art worthy to be loved of *me*. Who can forbear, O Lady, to love *thee*, by whose help we obtain both grace and glory? By *thee* are all chains broken in sunder, debts discharged, vices vanquished, such things as are broken amended, such as are lost restored, old things renewed, weak things strengthened, small things augmented, low things exalted, things begun are finished, and unperfect things are perfected. The heart is purged, the mind enlightened, the will inflamed, the breast melted, the taste sweetened, and the sight delighted. She that is a stranger is espoused, the spouse recreated, and the soul resolved. All these things come by thee, O Virgin *Mary*, and therefore, *Hail, Mary!*

6. Most truly art thou called *Mary*, which signifies *Star of the Sea*, *bitter Sea*, and *Lady*. Thou art the *Star of the Sea*, illuminating with the rays of thy eternal light the world, that is a place full of nothing but darkness and bitterness; a *bitter Sea*, wholly transforming thy heart with grief at the *Passion* of thy Son hanging on the cross for us, *Lady*, ascending to the right hand of thy Son above all the choirs of Angels. Thou art

the *Star of the Sea* by directing of us, a *bitter Sea* by compassionating of us, and *Lady* by protecting of us. The *Star of the Sea*, by reason of thy virtue, *bitter Sea* by reason of thy pity, and *Lady* by reason of thy power.

O Lord God, what shall we render unto Thee for all the things which Thou hast given us? What *shall* we do, or what *can* we do unto Thee (*we*, I say, overwhelmed with the gall of bitterness, environed on every side with darkness, far remote from the haven of salvation, tossed up and down with storms and tempests, by which we are in danger, not only to suffer shipwreck, but to be cast away and lose our lives), for that Thou hast given us so generous a comforter, so delicious a partner, so efficacious a helper, and so gracious a protector as is that glittering *Star*, the Virgin *Mary*.

O most blessed night, O happy darkness, O glorious obscurity, that hath deserved to be enlightened with such a *Star*! Certainly *this night is my illumination in my delights* (Ps. cxxxviii. 11). If thou, O glorious Virgin, beest the *Star of the Sea*, then, as long as I live, I will always be in the *Sea*, to the end that thou mayest be my *Star*. I will ever be, I say, in the *Sea* of perfect bitterness by *weeping for my sins*, by *compassionating Christ crucified*, and by *condoling the miseries and offences of my neighbours*. I will always sail in this threefold *Sea* that I may be guided by this *Star*. Woe be to them that live

in delights, and will not enter into this *Sea*, for they shall want this most pleasant *Star*.

Let all manner of tribulations come and board me, and compass me about with their unheard-of bitternesses; I will not be afraid, because thou art with me. Yea, even *then* thou shinest *most* bright unto me when I am compassed about with *most* afflictions, when I am destitute of all human help, when water enters in even unto my soul, when I am abhorred and rejected of all creatures. Let the whole frame of this universe impugn and vex me that am a most wicked sinner and worthy of all punishment, I care not, so as there remain with me this *Star of the Sea, Mary*.

O how happy shall I be when I shall be reviled and despised of all, and then received of this *Star*! She is *Star of the Sea*, and gives light to them that be in bitterness. O how pleasant and delightful is it to the eyes to behold this light! O how good and gainful is that change to abhor all consolation of the world, and to cast all from us with intention and desire never to enjoy the same any more for this glittering *Star of the Sea*! For one only glimpse of this *Star* is of more value than the most glorious splendour of all worldly things. Who is there, then, that would not gladly enter into the *Sea* of all bitterness, as well of *Passion* as *Compassion*, when this *Star* shines? And, therefore, a sound and perfect heart need not fear, because it is impossible to suffer shipwreck so long as this *Star* shines, neither can any

be overshadowed with clouds and darkness unless they will themselves.

O Blessed Lady, thou in this *Sea* art unto us the ship that bears us up and carries us, the anchor that holds and makes us fast, the stern that guides and makes us go right, the sail by which we go forward, and under which we are overshadowed, the *Star* that shines and shows unto us the haven of salvation ; yea, thou thyself goest along with us and preservest us. Who, then, would not willingly enter into this *Sea* of *Compunction*, *Passion*, and *Compassion*, where thou helpest all and ministerest to all ? Yea, if I may be so bold to say so, thou art made *Mary*—that is to say, a *bitter Sea*, by reason of the *Passion* of thy Son, and for the *compassion* of our iniquities. Not that thou art now sad or sorry for anything, but I consider thee as thou wert in this life besides the Cross.

Let us, then, enter into this double *Sea*—that is to say, of *compassion* towards thy Son crucified, and towards thine own heart joined to Him in His *Passion*, and of *Compunction* for our sins that were the cause unto Him of so cruel a death. And so will we enter into thy heart, which was made a great and spacious *Sea*. Who is there, then, that would not willingly enter into this *Sea* to the end he may enter into the Virgin's heart ? Certainly they do rightly enter into thy heart, O Blessed Virgin, and are continually in thy heart that continually meditate upon the

Passion of thy Son. For it is impossible, O most pitiful Mother, to enter into the wounds of thy Son, and not to enter into thy heart, because His wounds are placed in thy heart. For as those prints will ever remain in the body of thy Son, so in like manner will they ever remain in His Mother's mind. *Who*, then, will from henceforward be slow and backward to sail in this *Sea*? It is sweet to *hear* of thee, O sacred Lady, but more sweet to *think* of thee, but most pleasant and sweet of all to *enter* by *Christ's* wounds into thy heart. Let no man, therefore, depart from the *Passion*, contumelies, and wounds of *Christ* if he would ever remain in thy heart, for *there* a man is made as pure as a virgin, most holy, and Divine. *There* doth a man forget himself, thinking upon nothing but such things as belong to the Mother and the Son. Which He grant unto us Who lives blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV

A HUMBLE MEDITATION AND DEVOUT EXPOSITION UPON OUR LORD'S PRAYER

1. It is a great favour of God that He will be the Father of sinners.
2. Why He will be called Father in heaven.
3. How God's name is sanctified.
4. The kingdom of God against the kingdom of the world and of the flesh.
5. We ought to do God's will instead of our own.

6. Our material and spiritual bread is to be expected only from God.

7. We must beg it to-day, and not defer it till to-morrow.

8. Our debts active and passive.

9. The permission of temptations.

10. The evil from which we desire to be freed.

1. *Our Father, Who art in heaven*, etc. O immense clemency! O ineffable benignity! O admirable dignity that is done unto us! O the length, breadth, height, and depth of the Divine charity! Most filthy dirt, detestable corruption, and the most wicked creature in all the world, calls Himself the Son of God. And the Lord of Lords, King of Kings, and the Governor of all Governors, styles Himself *our Father*. When we pray, saith He, say thus: *Our Father, Who art in heaven*, etc. And that which truth itself speaks is most true. And I well know that He loves me beyond all comparison, a great deal more than doth my carnal father and mother, yea, than I do myself. My heart, therefore, shall be lifted up on high as an eagle for the joy of having such a *Father*. And being already an heir of Heaven I will contemn and scorn all sublunary things. For what have I to do with worldly honours that am the Son of God? It would be more disgrace for *me* to seek after any worldly honour, be it never so great, than for the son of an Emperor to cleanse and dress the most filthy place in all the world. What have I to do any more with

worldly riches who am heir of an eternal Kingdom? It would be more ignominious for *me* to be solicitous for any worldly riches, be they never so great, than for the heir of an Emperor to be in love with corruption. What have I to do any more with carnal and worldly delights though never so great? It were a more odious thing for *me* that am the son of the highest Monarch to be enamoured of any creature though never so beautiful and alluring, than for the son of a king to take delight in the most filthy and loathsome thing that is in the whole world. What thing is there that is good, beautiful, profitable, or desirable, which is able to allure and draw me that am the heir of all good, and the heir of Him that is the fountain of all beauty and goodness? For all things, in respect of Him, are but as a certain resemblance and shadow. I will, therefore, make haste and go to my *Father*, for He desires nothing else but to have me enjoy Himself. Why am I negligent in going? Why do I make any tarrying? Why do I mind anything else besides this? Certainly I will lay all things aside, and run with speed and violence unto Him. It is sufficient for me if I have Him to be my *Father*. And therefore I will bend my whole heart towards Him, and will not cast mine eyes upon anything else, but only upon my Lord God, because I wholly and only look upon *Him* with the eyes of my mind, for He hath exceedingly allured my mind unto Him.

Our Father. I have honey and the honeycomb in my mouth when I call upon Thee, O Lord, my *Father*. O unspeakable sweetness! O inestimable pleasantness! O ineffable gladness, when I dare to be so bold as to call Thee my *Father*! O exultation! O admiration! O pleasant recreation, because Thou art my *Father*! What need I proceed any further? What need I speak any more? What need I desire any more? Thou art my *Father*.

2. But where art Thou, O my *Father*, where art Thou? If Thou art everywhere, as indeed Thou art, how is, then, Thy seat *in heaven*? But according to Thy benign manner Thou wilt therefore have us to say, *Our Father, Who art in heaven*; to the end Thou mayest lift us up from earthly things to heavenly, where Thy power, Thy wisdom, Thy goodness is specially manifested; to the end that our conversation be there with Thee, O my *Father*. That we may learn to desire and demand of Thee heavenly things and not earthly. Or else certainly, because that we being made a spiritual heaven, Thy dwelling may be in *us*. What, then, shall keep us back, what shall hinder us from leading a celestial, and no more a terrestrial life, to the end that Thy habitation, O *Father*, may be in *us*? O worthy admission! O wonderful promotion! that *Christ* will vouchsafe to make within us His habitation! I that am most filthy, and an abominable sink of sin, by the immense

clemency of my God, am thought worthy to be His Tabernacle, and I that am full of all corruption am made the sacred Temple of my God, the residence of wisdom, and an habitation for the Holy Ghost. O happy day, O blessed hour, when I entertain such a guest! *I will hold Him fast, and will not let Him go until I bring Him into me* (Cant. iii. 4), or, rather, He bring me into His house, which is above—to wit, *the Jerusalem that is my Mother, and into the chamber of her that bare me* (Gal. iv. 26)—that is to say, into the most intimate rest of contemplation, where delicate and devout souls lie and take their rest.

3. *Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.* Oh, how well doth this follow, how aptly doth this petition depend, upon the former words—to wit, *hallowed be Thy name*, upon *Our Father, Who art in Heaven!* For filial devotion and celestial contemplation doth convert the whole mind of the reverencing son into his heavenly *Father*, that makes him cry and say, *Hallowed be Thy name.* As though he should say, I desire no earthly riches, delights, and honours, but that I may be wholly converted into Thee, and be made altogether Divine. *Hallowed*, therefore, *be Thy name*, to the end that my reasonable faculty illuminated by Thy wisdom—and all error, doubt, and darkness of understanding being driven away—I may have a clean and purified conscience—that is, a most pure knowledge of Thee. *Thy kingdom come*, that my

irascible faculty being strengthened by Thy power, I may ascend to the sublimity of Thy *kingdom*. *Thy will be done*, that my concupiscible faculty being sweetened with Thy goodness, and perfected with Thy charity, it may fully yield itself to Thy good *will* and pleasure ; that, according to most true and loving friendship, there be between us two one will and one nil. Or, *hallowed be Thy name*, as touching the pure knowledge of the understanding. *Thy kingdom come*, as touching the fervent desire of the will. *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, as touching the perfect obedience of our actions. Therefore, *hallowed be Thy name* in us, O Lord, which from all eternity is most holy in itself ; as that whatsoever we see, hear, understand, feel, we may wholly ordain to the knowledge of Thy most sacred *name*, that *Thy name* may be sanctified in us—that is to say, that it be without earth and altogether pure, that we being separated from all curiosity and vanity, and all unprofitable phantasies, we may always and in all things know Thee only, O most pious and holy *Father*. Let the eye of our mind be continually directed unto Thee, the eternal light. Let me ever *behold* Thee in all things, and *know* Thee in all things, Who art in all things, and from Whom are all things. Oh, how pleasant is this light ! How delightful is it to the eyes never to remove the sight of our mind from Thee, the Sun of justice ! Oh, how sweet, how amiable, and admirable is the brightness of Thy

beams to our eyes, and, therefore, *hallowed be Thy name.*

4. *Thy kingdom come.* The *kingdom* of this world hath now taken full possession of all my soul, yea, it hath wasted, torn in sunder, and polluted all my soul; it hath all blacked thy Spouse, my most loving soul. The vanity, or rather the filthiness, of this world hath allured and drawn away all my heart, and all my mind. And, therefore, such things as belong to the world I am sensible of, such things as belong to the flesh I covet and desire, and all my cogitations and affections are wholly set upon earthly things, so that I am become a denizen of this world, and I march under the standard of the Prince of this world. But, O my Lord, am I not Thy creature? Let *Thy kingdom come*, then, to the end that *the Prince of this world may be cast forth* (John xii. 31). Do Thou reign wholly in me; do Thou only dwell in my mind; let *Thy kingdom* wholly possess me, let it wholly challenge my desires; do Thou only recreate my affections. What do I seek? What do I desire? What would I have? Whither do I wander? Whither do I run? and how am I distracted? *Thy kingdom* is sufficient for me, O Lord; let my habitation be there, let my refection be there, and let all my conservation be there. Thou art only good, Thou art only fair, Thou art only amiable, Thou are only desirable, O Thou lover of souls. Do thou, therefore, only rule me; do

Thou only direct me; do Thou only allure me; do Thou only take my heart unto Thee, O Thou fervent lover of souls. Let my heart and my breast rest only in Thee, let my heart be sweetened in Thee alone, do Thou only fill my mind. I will ascend with violence unto Thee, my centre and my *kingdom*, O Thou Redeemer of souls. And, therefore, *let Thy kingdom come*.

5. *Thy will be done*. This is my *will*, this is my desire, that I seek with my most intimate affections—namely, that *in* me, and *of* me, and by me, not mine, but *Thy will be done*. Let me be wholly Thine, let me rejoice at nothing but Thy honour only. I was made for this, to this was I born, that I should seek after Thy honour only. Let me not now yield myself to the fulfilling of mine appetites, let me not seek mine own commodity and profit, let me not now desire the love of my friends, but let me only strive to fulfil *Thy will* alone in all things. Let me not think of what is bitter, or what is sweet; what is heavy, or what is light; what is easy, or what is hard; but let me be careful (with an earnest and fervent desire, and with great solicitude) to perform such things as are pleasing unto *Thy will*. Let this thing only be pleasant unto me, let this be sweet unto me, let this be light unto me, let this be delightful and amiable—namely, to desire and perform *Thy will* by things though never so sharp, base, difficult, and bitter to flesh and blood. Let it be my joy and rejoicing, and

my most inward exultation, to expose myself wholly, always, and upon all occasions to the seeking of such things as concern Thy honour, which I wish I could by any manner of means effectually accomplish. Oh, that I alone could do all services that belong unto Thee, O my Lord ! I do more rejoice, and do like it better, and do with all my heart and all that is within me desire wholly to expose and even consume myself for Thy honour, and in doing *Thy will*, rather than to be delighted with the most celestial and Divine delights that are. For if I were to be torn in pieces with wild beasts for Thee, O my Lord, and should suffer all pains and death for Thy honour, I would more like and love them, and would a great deal more rejoice in them than I would rejoice for any delight whatsoever that could happen unto me, yea, than for that which I should enjoy in the kingdom of heaven, unless that delight there were as much, or rather more, for Thy honour, which I would rather wish, not by reason of the delight, but by reason of Thy honour. For I am not made for the consolation of mine own vanity, but for the honouring of Thy bounty. What thing is greater unto me, what sweeter, what more amiable unto me, than to resolve myself wholly into Thy honour ? Oh, how great joy, gladness, and consolation is it to me that I can do anything, though with never so great difficulty, that makes for Thy honour ! This is the Angels' joy, the celestial

reward, to obey *Thee*, wholly to enjoy *Thee*, and to be entirely conformable to *Thy will*, and to extol with admiration Thy honour and magnificence. I do not doubt, nay, I am most certain, that the Angels and blessed souls in heaven do more rejoice for the magnificence of Thy honour than for their own glory. And, therefore, *Thy will be done, as in heaven*—that is, as in the heavenly Spirits, so likewise *in earth*—that is, in us men. And grant that we may as willingly, fervently, and freely obey Thy will as they do, to the end that (according to the possibility of our power) we may in all things be conformable to the same.

6. *Give us this day our daily bread.* Oh, how well doth He order, and how elegantly doth He conjoin these words to the former ! And although they may be expounded of the material and spiritual *bread*, yet for the present we will specially understand them of the Sacramental *bread* ; and so, as I have said, in the words of our Lord, there is an admirable and excellent order. For who is so worthy, who so fitting to receive this Blessed Sacrament, to offer the Son to God His Father, as he that, as hath been said before, hath wholly disposed and ordained himself for God, both in his understanding, affections, and actions ; than he that hath wholly offered himself unto God, hath wholly burnt himself in sacrifice ; that in himself is altogether annihilated, and wholly transferred unto God ; that seeks not his own

things, but those that belong to *Christ Jesus*. Such a one as he may well receive *Christ Jesus* in this sacrifice, may offer Him to God the Father for himself and others ; and therefore our Master doth well premise that petition, *Hallowed be Thy name*, and adjoin this that follows, *Give us this day our daily bread*. For he that is come out of the Egypt of his sins may say, *Hallowed be Thy name* ; and he that hath passed on dry foot the Red Sea of overwhelming temptations in which the Egyptians were drowned may say, *Thy kingdom come* ; and he that in the desert of temptation hath dedicated and devoted himself wholly to God may say, *Thy will be done* ; and he that is a-hungry in this desert, and doth demand of his celestial Father manna—that is to say, the *bread* of heaven—may say, *Give us this day our daily bread*. For he that hath erewhile sitten over the fleshpots of Egypt doth now despise them, and instead thereof desires, demands, and obtains the living *bread* that came down from heaven.

O admirable mercy of *Christ* ! O wondrous joy of mind ! God that is my husband and my love is made my food. The reward of Saints and the joy of Angels, and the Word of God the Father, is become my nutriment. The light of the world, the Sun of heaven, the wisdom of God, is the refection of my mind. The Virgin's Son, man's Redemption, and the glory of heaven, is made my meat. Why, then, do I affect anything else ? What is there else that can allure me ?

Far be it from me, O Lord, that my heart, from the time it hath received so noble food, should be affected towards anything in all the world. How is it possible, after the tasting of such meat as is most noble, sufficient, most sweet and pleasant, that my heart can be delighted with any vain, filthy, and unclean things ? And if my heart cannot at all times receive Him sacramentally, it ought never to cease receiving Him at least spiritually. In truth, it seems a wonder—yea, and more than a wonder—how that for very sweetness and extreme fervour of love, the heart doth not faint in receiving this same food. Be Thou alone, good *Jesus*, my meat and my refec-tion ; let me hunger after Thee alone ; let me with a greedy and insatiable appetite eat Thee alone, and let me never have my fill of Thee. For what is more delicious than Thou ? What is more sweet, what is more lovely than Thou, O good *Jesus* ? I will therefore eat no other thing but Thee ; I desire to taste nothing but Thee alone ; for Thou dost always relish most sweetly in my heart. If only the smell of Thee ought to suffice the whole world, how much more, then, ought the feeding on Thee ! If we have our nourishing and being from the word that proceeds out of Thy mouth, what a thing is that, then, to receive Thee, the eternal Word, into our mouth, and to chew Thee with the teeth of our heart ! How is it that the very inwards of our heart do not melt in Thee ?—Why is not my heart so

much delighted in *Thee* as that it forgets all things *besides Thee*? If an earthly thing, or, rather, that which hath but the likeness of earth, doth sometimes so possess and take up my heart as that it forgets *Thee*, how comes it to pass that Thy most assured presence doth not so much refresh and inebriate me as that I forget all the world—yea, and myself too? Therefore, O heavenly *Father*, give us this day our daily bread. Give us this bread, that in this present life, and at all times else, we may have Him present with us. Let this food be ever spiritually present, and let it never know past nor to come. But teach us, O good *Jesus*, to say, *This day*.

7. Why dost Thou make such haste to be with us? Why dost Thou not rather tarry till to-morrow? What dost Thou see or perceive *in us*, or what dost Thou know to be *in us*, that Thou art so exceedingly inebriated with the love of *us*? What dost Thou find *in us*, or what dost Thou gain by *us*, or what recompense dost Thou receive from *us*, that doth make Thee impatient of delay? What is the reason that the love Thou bearest to us is so urgent in Thee as that Thou canst not defer Thy coming, but wilt be with us out of hand, though we yield Thee no fruit nor benefit at all? But, on the other side, how do we, that are mere corruption, and altogether unworthy to be called so much as the very worst and vilest of all Thy creatures, put off the time when Thou desirest to be with us, as that we do not obtain

Thee, the Sovereign good, and the most pure mirror of all virtue and perfection? Thou, O good Lord, for Thy part, wilt make no delay, as Thou well showest; and therefore we likewise will not make any delay, but we will demand and seek to have Thee even *to-day*. For our resolution in this matter ought not to be slow, as it might well be if we demanded and could not obtain. And because we do at this present demand and desire Thee, and Thou also desirest the same, come, therefore, unto our heart, because our heart ascends up unto Thee. Behold, Thou art inebriated with the love of *us*, and we with the love of *Thee*. Let, therefore, the force of love violently join Thee unto *us*, and us unto *Thee*. And now, all delay being set aside, let us embrace one another, and let my soul, being absorbed with the abundance of love, faint betwixt Thy arms. For when I felt Thy embracings, Thou didst stir up my mind; after that Thou didst feed me, and then inebriate me, and last of all, with Thy embracings and Thy kisses together, Thou hast separated my soul from my body, which quietly rests in Thy arms. And although she be unworthy, yet Thou dost not disdain her, nor cast her away from Thee, but, holding her fast unto Thee, criest and sayest: *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you raise not, nor make My beloved to awake, until herself will* (Cant. ii. 7).

But I adjure Thy clemency, O good *Jesus*, to tell me why Thou sayest *daily*? Wilt Thou be

our continual food ? Is it not sufficient if Thou dwellest and remainest with us for one day only ? What have we done unto Thee ? What shall I say concerning Thy good-will ? I know not, because in these infinite treasures of Thy clemency my mind doth faint, so as it cannot consider so much as a small sparkle, the abyss thereof is so great. And therefore I know not what else to say but this—that, since Thou wilt ever be with *us*, we ought always to be with *Thee*, and never depart *from Thee*, Who art our most bountiful and beautiful husband, and our most sweet and pleasant food. For Thou, O Lord, dost so glue us unto Thee by Thy love and devotion as that we have neither power nor will ever to get away from Thee. So, then, *Give us this day our daily bread.*

8. *And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Order and join these words thus with them that go before. O good *Jesus*, Thou hast most bountifully and earnestly offered most noble food unto us Thy unworthy servants. But what ? I fear lest I be invited to this banquet, as *Aman* was to Esther (Esth. vi. 14). And although, good *Jesus*, this be not Thy intention, yet I fear it happen unto me, by reason of mine own injustice, because I know and acknowledge my sins. What is this ? Behold, a most sumptuous banquet is prepared for me ; waiters—namely, holy Angels—attend upon me, and mine own hunger excites and com-

pels me ; and yet for all this I dare not presume to fall to, because I have sinned. What, then, shall I do, for I am in a strait on every side ? But certainly I know what to choose ; for I will go to my heavenly *Father*, of Whom it is said before, *Our Father*, and will say unto Him : *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee : I am no more worthy to be called Thy son : make me as one of Thy hirelings* (Luke xv. 18)—that is to say, *forgive us our trespasses*. O happy acknowledgment of sin, that merits the embraces of the *Father* ! It may be that with the fervency of love I shall be resolved and melted betwixt His arms, and changed into another man, and for that cause shall be so venturous as to taste of the fatted calf ; and, therefore, *Forgive us our trespasses*.

O the wonderful love of our God towards us ! We have contemned Him, and changed Him for most filthy corruption ; and yet He persuades us to ask *forgiveness* of Him, because He means to *forgive* us the punishment together with the offence, which He would not do to the Angels. How, I pray, good Lord, canst Thou find in Thy heart to look any more *upon us*, who have so shamefully cast Thee away *from us* ? But sith Thou Thyself dost persuade us to say, *Forgive us our trespasses*, be Thou, therefore, pleased to *forgive us our trespasses*, because Thou hast paid our debts, and hast offered up Thyself in sacrifice for us. Thou art He that teachest us to say,

Forgive us ; and this Thou art able to perform unto us. Is not our peace already made ? Is not the feast of peace celebrated now every day ? Forgive us, therefore, our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

O blessed debt of our neighbour ! O happy offence which we may allege and urge before God, for the forgiveness of our own ! Let us not, therefore, most dear brethren, be sorry if men do offend us, if they wrong us, if they afflict us, if they rob and take away our goods from us. But let us rejoice and be glad for these things—yea, let us love and desire to have them happen unto us ; for by the *forgiving* of our neighbour these *trespasses* we may plead the *forgiveness* of our own. And there is no doubt but this plea is of great virtue and efficacy which our supreme Advocate and Judge hath taught us, saying : *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven* (Luke vi. 37).

9. *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation.* For what doth it profit, O Lord, to be baptized, or washed from touching of the dead, if I touch him again (Eccles. xxxiv. 30) ? It is not sufficient for me, O Lord, that Thou *forgive* me my sins *past*, unless Thou also preserve me from all sin *to come*. But I am very prone to sin, and unless Thou keep and hold me in, I shall rush headlong into all manner of sin. What did it profit *Aman* to be advanced by King *Assuerus* above all princes, whenas for his pride he was

hanged upon the gallows ? What am I the better, to obtain that which he demanded in the former words, unless Thou, O my Lord, do also preserve me from *temptations* ? And, therefore, *Lead us not into temptation.*

Thou, O good *Jesus*, wilt have us to pray thus, because Thou often permittest us to be assaulted with *temptations*, to the end we may have recourse unto Thee. Thou usest all ways and means that Thou canst to draw us *unto* Thee, because Thou desirest to have us *with Thee* ; and, therefore, when I am *tempted*, I will fly unto my heavenly *Father's* arms, that He may receive me when I am afraid and come unto Him ; and I will say : *And lead us not into temptation.* This is my *Father's* will and pleasure, and this He expects of me—namely, to run unto Him as to my help and refuge, and place myself in His lap, that so, altogether despairing in myself, I may put my trust and confidence in Him alone ; and, therefore, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

10. It is true, O Lord, that we are worthy of all *evil*, because we have contemned all *good*. But, O most pitiful *Father*, look upon Thine infinite mercy and our most detestable wickedness, and ease and release us, little and weak as we are, of this insupportable burthen that lies upon us, from *evil* oppressing and destroying us, and hindering us from all good. *Deliver* Thy servants, that we may freely submit ourselves to Thy rule

and government, and be intent to Thy service alone ; but especially *deliver* us from the most terrible and horrible *evil* of all, which is eternal, that we be not deprived of Thy most desirable vision, which even all our bones do abhor. For what good would it be unto me to be Thy creature unless I shall enjoy Thee and be wholly transported in Thee, in Thy eternal kingdom ? Which He grant unto us, that is blessed for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XV

TWO OTHER EXPOSITIONS UPON OUR LORD'S PRAYER

1. The first.

2. The second.

I. THE aforesaid prayer may be also otherwise expounded. *Our Father* is put in the first place, to the end we may come unto *Christ* with confidence ; *Who art in heaven*, to teach us to seek such things as are above, and not those that are upon earth ; *Hallowed be Thy name*, as concerning the illustration of faith ; *Thy kingdom come*, as concerning the firmness of hope ; *Thy will be done*, as concerning the conformity and perfection of charity ; *Give us this day our daily bread*, as concerning our nutriment and sustentation of temperance, which is specially exhibited in the Bread of the Eucharist ; *And forgive us our trespasses*, as concerning the correspondence and

merit of justice by that which is added—as *we forgive them that trespass against us*; *And lead us not into temptation*, as concerning the act of prudence, which consists in being wary to avoid snares and deceits; *But deliver us from evil*, as concerning the act of fortitude, which consists in enduring adversities. Amen.

2. We may also expound the aforesaid petitions and apply them to those things that we shall have in the celestial country; so as *Hallowed be Thy name* be referred to the manifest and clear vision, as though He had said: “That which we now see as in a looking-glass, and as by a riddle, we may then see purely and without anything put between.” *Thy kingdom come*, as touching the firm possession, that we may reign eternally. *Thy will be done*, as touching consummated charity, which doth fully transform the *lover* into the thing *loved*. And then we must expound *in earth, as it is in heaven*; as in Angels, so in men. *Give us this day our daily bread*, as touching the most sweet fruition. And then we must expound *daily*—that is, continual—because *there* in that place is always day. *This day*—that is, for the present—because it hath neither past nor to come, but is wholly together, which is more fitly noted by the present. *And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*, in which is desired the coming of *Christ*, whenas debts—that is, sins—shall be forgiven the true Jews—that is

the penitent and confessed ; for man will forgive man, and God will forgive men all their trespasses and debts. *And lead us not into temptation*, in which is desired that beautifulness of peace, of which it is said : *My people shall sit in the beauty of peace* (Isa. xxxii. 18), where Satan is not any more, neither is there any evil to encounter us. *But deliver us from evil*, as though He should have said : “Bring us into that state which is perfect by the accumulation of all good things, and pleasant by the privation of all evil, where we shall be freed from evil.”

This exposition requires much admiration and wonderful devotion, inward exultation and rejoicing, and a full rendering of all praise. And in the same there are a great many wonderful and unspeakable treasures of contemplation ; but I am not able nor worthy to relate them, nor to take them into my unclean mouth, especially when I dare not be so bold as to *enter into the court of Assuerus, not being called* (Esth. iv. 11). And, therefore, let such things as we have spoken be sufficient to satisfy our simplicity ; and let us remain without in the *court*, desiring that *Christ*, out of His clemency and mercy, will *stretch forth His golden rod unto us*, that we may securely *enter in unto Him*, and always reign *with Him*, Who is blessed for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI

A MEDITATION UPON THE "SALVE REGINA"

1. The greatness of the Blessed Virgin, and how some salute her.

2. We desire to live under her government.
3. She is most solicitous of such as are in misery.
4. She is our life by many titles.
5. Our sweetness.
6. Our hope.
7. The ends why the Blessed Virgin is saluted.
8. The secure and profitable access unto her.
9. The cry of the godly unto her.
10. The exile of the sons of Eve.
11. Their sighs in this vale of tears.
12. The Blessed Virgin is our Advocate.
13. Her eyes are full of mercy.
14. The fruit of her womb.
15. Her clemency, pity, and sweetness.

1. FOR the saluting of the Virgin *Mary*, first of all you ought to consider her greatness. For she could not be exalted any higher in respect of her Son than to be called the Mother of God. Admiring, therefore, and rejoicing at the greatness of her that is also *our* Mother, as also coming unto her with reverence and devotion, say, *All hail!* As soon as you have said this, presently enter into consideration of your own littleness, and the greatness of this Mother, and say, Have patience with me, for that I, who am the vilest of all men, dare presume to present myself before so great a Lady, and salute *her* that is the Queen

of heaven, the Lady of Angels, and the Mother of God. But my confidence is in thy humble benignity and benign humility, that thou wilt bear with me that am unworthy. And although thou beest the Ark of the Old Testament, and I be most ignoble and base, yet when I shall touch thee with my heart and salute thee with my mouth, I do not believe I shall be smitten by thee, but rather be inflamed with thy love, and be heard of thy most liberal pity in all things. And therefore, *All hail, O Queen !*

2. From henceforward I will serve thee under thy Regiment, O Blessed Lady, and resign myself over to thy government, that thou mayest wholly rule and govern me. Leave me not to myself, because I am too much contrary to myself, and, therefore, whatsoever thou shalt commit to my charge shall be most miserably performed. But seeing I am full of misery, and from the sole of my foot to the crown of my head nothing but putrefaction . . . how can it be that thou, a creature so noble, wilt vouchsafe to govern a creature so abominable and filthy as I am ? Certainly because thou art the *Queen of mercy*. For who are the subjects of mercy but such as be in misery ? Thou art the *Queen of mercy*, and I am the most miserable of all sinners, and consequently the chiefest of all thy subjects. How comes it to pass, then, that thou wilt not exercise in me the effect of thy mercy ?

3. Truly, O Lady, thou art the *Queen of*

mercy, because there is none in this life so desperate or miserable for whom thou wilt not obtain saving mercy if he address himself to thee, and shroud himself under thy protection and government. Verily, when I look upon thee, O Lady, I see nothing but *mercy*. For thou wert made the Mother of God for the miserable, thou didst bear Mercy itself, and, lastly, the office of showing *mercy* is committed to thee. Thou art upon all occasions solicitous for the miserable, thou art wholly environed with *mercy*, and thou seemest to desire nothing else but that thou mayest show *mercy*. Thou takest great care for the miserable—these are *they* whom thou hast adopted for thy children, and thou, O Lady, art willing to rule over *them*, and therefore thou art rightly called *the Mother of mercy*.

What occasion, then, have we from henceforward to be in doubt or fear? Who is there that, demanding anything of thee, shall not obtain the same? Surely none but such as do not acknowledge themselves to be miserable, for there is none under thy government but such as are miserable. Or else, who is there that will acknowledge his own misery, and will not put his confidence in thy *mercy*? And, therefore, let *them* only fear that think themselves to be just, and such as are proud and presumptuous and will not submit themselves to thy government, and such as are indeed miserable, but do not desire thy *mercy*.

4. But let us poor miserable sinners from henceforth be comforted with *thee* ; let us for ever hereafter, O Blessed Lady, dwell with *thee* ; and, lastly, let us embrace *thee* with all our heart, because thou art *our life—life*, indeed, which overcamest the death of pride, obtainedst for us the *life* of grace, and didst bear within thee the *life* of glory. And there is no doubt but thou hast given to many the *life* of nature. For in all things thou that art *life* opposest thyself unto death.

O wonderful *life*, that endeavourest to revive the dead. By thee, O Blessed Lady, man hath passed from privation to habit. O *life* not fearing death, expelling death, making mortal man to become immortal. O truly amiable *life*, desirable *life*, delectable *life* ! O *life*, never waxing old, but rather causing old men to return back to their young age again ! O *life*, that bringest carnal lives to nothing, and abhorrest them ! O *life*, that nourishest with celestial food ! O *life*, truly contrary to the *life* of the world ! For he that would have *thee*, let him afflict himself, refuse riches, condemn all delicate things, and the more he shall mortify himself the more he shall possess thee. O *life*, strengthening us with Divine power—namely, with Divine impetration—ruling us with Divine wisdom, and refreshing us with Divine goodness ! If thou beest my *life*, why, then, art thou not always in me ? Why dost thou not quicken my soul

and make it to grow? Who will give me the gift that I may ever enjoy the benefit of this *life*?

5. *Sweetness* — true *sweetness*, that by obtaining pardon for us expellest the bitterness of sin from us, and procurest *for* us the *sweetness* of grace and life, and carriest us into the sweet contemplation of the celestial country! O *sweet* Lady, whose only memory doth *sweeten* the affections, the meditation of whose magnificence doth elevate the mind, whose beauty doth delight the understanding, the immensity of whose pleasantness doth inebriate the heart of the Meditator! O good Lady, that dost ravish the hearts of men with *sweetness*, hast thou not also ravished *my* heart? and where, I pray, hast thou put it, that I may seek for it? Hast thou put it in thy sacred lap that I should not find it, or placed it betwixt thy blessed breasts? It may be thou hast put it there to warm it, which was cold before. O ravisher of hearts, when wilt thou restore my heart unto me? Why dost thou thus ravish the hearts of poor simple men? Why dost thou offer such violence to thy friends? Dost thou mean always to keep my heart? When I demand it of thee, thou smilest upon me, and then I, being laid asleep with thy *sweetness*, quietly take my rest. And when I am come to myself, and demand my heart again, thou, most sweet Lady, embracest me, and presently I am so inebriated with thy love as that I cannot

discern mine own heart, neither do I know how to ask anything else but thine.

6. But seeing my heart is thus inebriated with thy *sweetness*, govern the same with *thine*, conserve it in the blood of the Lamb, and place it in the side of thy Son; then shall I obtain what I desire, and possess what I hope for, for thou art *our hope*.

Art not thou Queen, O Blessed Lady? Art not thou the Mother of our reward—namely, of *Christ*, Who is the recompense of all good and blessed souls? Art not thou she that desirest to exalt us? Dost not thou love us more beyond all comparison, and dost more procure our good than any carnal mother can do? If, then, thou wilt make us glorious—yea, because thou wilt—who can hinder thee? *Let them hope in thee that know thy name, because thou dost not forsake them that seek thee* (Ps. ix. 11). O Blessed Lady! certainly they *that hope in thee* will change their strength: they will take unto them wings and fly like eagles, and never be faint, and they will run without any labour (Is. xl. 31). Who would not *hope in thee*, whenas thou helpest them that be in despair? And who would not *hope in thee*, whenas *by thee* the prayers of our forefathers have been heard, and their promises fulfilled? What could the Patriarchs and Prophets desire *by thee* which they did not obtain? And if our ancient fathers have had all these things *by thee*, shall not we that are redeemed with the blood of

thy Son much more obtain what we demand ? I make no doubt but if we have recourse unto *thee* we shall have what we would. Let him that is in despair *hope in thee*. Let him that faints run with confidence *unto thee*. Let him that would have anything come *unto thee*, saying, *All hail !*

7. What is there that from henceforward shall be able to hinder us from saluting of *thee*, since thou art *our life, sweetness, and hope* ? Or what shall be able to hinder us from reverencing thee, seeing thou art *our Queen* ? And what is it to repeat this salutation but to yield reverence to thee without end ? What is it to salute and resalute but to demand salvation and the increase of salvation by thee, O Lady ? Why do we salute and salute again but to be preserved in health and safety as well interiorly as exteriorly by thee, O Lady ? Why do I reiterate this Salutation but for that I would have thee revered by my inward and outward man ? Why do I salute thee but to have thee ? And why do I salute thee again but to possess thy Son *by thee* ? And why do I salute thee again but to make thee attentive to my desires ? And why do I yet again salute thee but to the end that thou mayest receive and perfect those my desires ? Or else certainly we salute thee first of all that thereby we may commend thee, and, secondly, that after this miserable life is ended we may enjoy the glory of thy Son. Thou art

saluted the first time, O Blessed Lady, that we may obtain grace by thee, and the second time that by thee we may come unto glory.

8. *To thee. To thee*, indeed, because thou alone didst bear our Lord, thou alone hast destroyed all heresy, thou alone art the Lady of the celestial kingdom, thou alone art the dispenser of our reward. *To thee* the Mother of mercy, and truly a Mother, who washest us from the dregs of our sins; thou dost comfort us little ones crying in our cradles; thou dost give us suck when we are hungry, and when we are weak and ready to fall thou upholdest us with thy arms. Thou dost truly heal and strengthen the wounded, and givest health to the sick, and thou art not only the Mother, but also the very medicine itself of the sick and miserable, even thou who art the Queen of Angels. *To thee*, indeed, who forsakest not the delinquent, who rejectest not them that fly unto thee, who allurest with thy fair, pleasant words, and dost foster and nourish us with thy delights—

9. *To thee do we cry*. And how should we do any otherwise than *cry*, that are wounded and feel the smart of our wounds, and are compassed about on every side with enemies? We that are in anguish and oppressed with infinite miseries *do cry; we cry* in the anxiety of our heart, in the emptiness of our stomach and in the bitterness of grief; or else, perhaps, *we cry* by reason of the immensity of love we bear unto thee, to keep

thee from sleeping. For why dost thou sleep, O Lady? Rise and help us! *We* also *cry*, to the end we may make our misery known unto thee, because our necessity compels us to *cry unto thee*. And we likewise *cry unto thee*, that we may move thee to compassion, with which *crying* our throat is hoarse. Why, then, dost thou delay thy coming? or why sufferest thou us to be thus afflicted? If, therefore, thou shalt stay long, and I with *crying* shall lose my voice, so that I be not able to *cry* any more unto thee, I shall be quite undone. For what shall I then do when thou wilt be so far from granting what I desire, as that thou wilt not be able to hear what I say? What shall I do, O Blessed Lady, when I shall be utterly forsaken of thee, when thou wilt not tender thy breasts unto me? Come quickly and help me crying *unto thee*, lest I fall into the hands of mine enemies. Run, make haste, O Blessed Lady, and help, by forgiving of me thy most wicked and unfaithful servant that *crieth unto thee*, and deliver me out of the hands and perils of thine enemy! If there were nothing else to move thee, O Lady, but because thine enemy is so bold as to set upon thy servants, thou oughtest with all speed to come and help us. Run, therefore, and free us, that so his insolent pride may be repressed. Run, lest thine enemies get the dominion over us, thy little weak clients. Run, lest they say, "Where is their God, in Whose clemency they trusted?"

10. Thou oughtest not to wonder, O Lady, that we thus *cry unto thee*, for we are far off *from* thee, having gone our ways into a remote country (Luke xv.), where we have wasted our patrimony ; which is as much as to say, if we had been nearer, we could then have spoken lower ; but because we are far off, *we cry, exiles* as we are—*exiles* from our country, *exiles* from the Divine vision—and I would to God we were not always *exiles* from grace and *exiles* from our Mother's consolation. O soul, why art thou not rather separated from thy body than from this Lady ? Thou art banished from *Christ* thy Head, and how canst thou that art so miserable walk without a head ? Is it not a monstrous thing to walk without a head ? Ah me ! why am I banished for so long a time ? How or when shall I see God my Saviour, or, at least, when shall I see my Blessed Lady ? I do not doubt, O Lady, but if we, like *exiles*, shall *cry unto thee* from our heart, we shall fully possess thee and thy Son. Why, then, do we set up our rest here, and not, rather, aspire unto our country ? Why do we not affect to embrace our most sweet Mother ? Why do we not desire to remain with her and her Son ?

O Blessed Lady, as long as we are here make us to be exiles, lest, presuming and thinking we are in our country, we give over seeking of *thee* and thy Son. Yet, notwithstanding, make us to be so *exiled* in body as that we be citizens with thee in mind.

Sons of Eve. Truly *sons of Eve*, because proud and presumptuous; truly *sons of Eve*, because ambitious and covetous—at least, for knowledge, and I wish we were not so for anything else—gluttonous, carnal, and disobedient; and briefly, in all things following of *Eve*, and most prompt to all evil, but slow to that which is good. And if it chance that any of us do conceive a son of good works, we bring him forth with pain and grief of heart; but we are delivered of evil with joy and gladness. Neither are we content to sin ourselves alone, but as *Eve* and *Adam*, so do we endeavour to stain others with our sins; and as she excused herself, even so do we in our misdeeds excuse ourselves, or, at least, if we can we lay the blame of our sins upon others. It is irksome to us to eat of the tree of life and to contemplate our Lord on the Cross; but we stretch forth our hand to the forbidden fruit, not caring for contemplation, by which we may enjoy the comfortable delights of Paradise, but we had rather remain in the dregs of our sins. For it is more pleasing unto us to turmoil ourselves in the getting of base things, though with much labour and sweat, than to feed upon the Lord of glory; for unless thou, O Lady, hadst helped us, we had been, perhaps, ere this time in the bottom of hell. Neither is there anything that can excuse us, for we do not in anything imitate *thee*, but *Eve*; and this is the cause, O Lady, that—

II. *To thee we sigh.* We sigh for the absence of so good a Mother, desiring to come unto thee, O Lady. *To thee we sigh*, for the affection we bear to thy Son. *To thee we sigh* as young children, earnestly desiring to be nourished with thy breasts. *To thee we sigh* for the desire of thee ; and *to thee we sigh* for the love of ourselves. For there is nothing but thy love, O Lady, wherewith we are inwardly inebriated towards thee, that compels us *to sigh unto thee*. For who doth not love thee, that art the repairer of mankind and the furnace of love, brighter than the sun and sweeter than honey ; the magazine of goodness, the mirror of virtue, and the model of all sanctity ? Thou art affable to all, delectable to all. Thou art the seat of wisdom, the river of clemency, and the ray of the Deity ; neither is there any that can hide himself from *thy* heat. Who is there, then, that would not *sigh after thee* ? We *sigh*, by reason of love and grief, for afflictions press us on every side. Why, then, do we not now *sigh unto thee*, who art the solace of the miserable, the refuge of the banished, the redemption of the captives, the medicine of the sick, the Mother of young ones, the spouse of old ones, the Queen of warriors, and the Lady of all—yea, of such as are thine enemies ; for there is none that can withstand thy will. We, thus afflicted, thus miserable, *do sigh unto thee*, that art such a Lady, *groaning and weeping in this vale of tears*.

Thou, O Lady, seest how full of bitterness we

are. We *groan* inwardly and *weep* outwardly, and all because we live in a lamentable place. Loaden with sins, *we groan* ; burthened with affliction, *we weep* ; because we are here in this *vale of tears*, abounding with all manner of miseries. We *groan*, being wounded, and *weep*, being robbed ; because in this *vale of tears* we are destitute of all help. *We groan* because we cannot see the Sun, *we weep* because we are forced to serve our enemies ; and, therefore, we that are in this *vale of tears* do implore thy aid. This world, indeed, is a right *vale of tears* to which all sorrowful and lamentable things have recourse and flow. To this *vale* did flow the devils of hell, the sin of our first parents, and all the miseries of the ancient fathers. What else can I say ? I am not able, neither do I know how, to express all the horrible things of this *vale*.

12. *O therefore, thou our Advocate, turn unto us those thy merciful eyes.* Oh, the admirable clemency of our Creator, that vouchsafeth so noble and sovereign a help to creatures thus afflicted ! Oh, the wonderful benignity of our God, that giveth thee, O Lady, to be an *Advocate* for us, His guilty malefactors, to the end that thou, being placed by thy Son between us and the Judge, mayest obtain what thou wilt for us ! Neither is there any doubt to be made but that our sins do justly condemn us, whom the plea of thy pity doth mercifully save. Oh, the admirable mercy of our God towards us, Who, lest we

should fly somewhither else for a sentence, hath vouchsafed to communicate himself unto us, not only as Judge, as being God and man *Jesus Christ*, by Whom our sentence must be pronounced ; but He would also ordain thee, His Mother, to be the Lady of grace and our *Advocate* ! And, therefore, thou needest not fear to be merciful to the miserable, and to incline his sentence to that part which thou defendest, and give unto us glory for which Thou pleadest. I well know that after sentence there is no appeal can be made to any that is greater, because, although the Judge be a man and thy Son, yet He is also God and the Son of God. Neither do I see how He can deny *thee* anything, but we may obtain all things by *thee*—yea, and, if Thou pleasest, the celestial country. This is that which our God would have, this is that He desires, this is the thing for the which He hath constituted thee, His Mother, to be our *Advocate* ; and therefore there remains nothing else, O Lady, but that thou *turn unto us those thy merciful eyes*.

13. For I do not doubt but if thou wilt be pleased to look upon our miseries that thy mercy will splendidly perform its office. Admirable and amiable are the rays of thine *eyes*, by which thou allurest us to the love of thee ; and for the perfect healing of us, dost put out the venomous *eyes* of the basilisk. O venomous *eyes* of Eve, why do ye not offer yourselves to the *eyes* of this Virgin, if you will be perfectly healed ? For the clear-

ness of *her eyes* doth expel all obscurity ; it chases away all the troops of devils, purges the vices of the mind, inflames hearts that are frozen, and, last of all, draws us up to heaven. How happy, then, are they, O Blessed Lady, whom those eyes of thine do behold !

14. Turn, therefore, *unto us those thy merciful eyes, and show to us, after this exile, Blessed Jesus, the fruit of thy womb.* O admirable womb, that was able to *conceive* within it its Creator ! O commendable womb, that deserved to *receive* into it the redemption of mankind ! O desirable womb, from whence did flow the desire of minds, the river of graces, and the reward of glory ! O womb, now no more a womb, but the empyreal heaven ! In this womb was contained the price of them that were lost, the happiness of the blessed, and the God of Angels ! O blessed womb, fountain of pity, pool of sanctity, river of goodness—thy womb, O Lady ! O happy womb, that didst bear the Sun, repair the world, and recover our country ! Oh, how precious is that womb, that did carry within it physic for the sick, life for the dead, and Paradise for the just ! . . . O amiable womb and delight of the soul ! O elevation of minds, inebriation of hearts, sweetness of sinners, thy fruit, O Lady ! This is truly blessed fruit ; even from the very beginning of His being, this is *Jesus*, the Son of the living God. This same *Jesus*, the *blessed fruit of thy womb*, show Him favourable and merciful to us,

after this exile, that, seeing of Him, we may have Him; and having of Him, we may enjoy Him.

15. *O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary! O clement to them that stand in need of thee! O pious to them that pray unto thee! O sweet to them that are in love with thee! O clement to the penitent! O pious to the proficient! O sweet to the contemplant! O clement in labouring! O pious in granting, O sweet in giving, even thine own self! O clement in comforting! O pious in cherishing! O sweet in kissing! O clement in effecting! O pious in affecting! O sweet in discoursing! O clement to them that think of thee, pious to them that look upon thee, and sweet to them that embrace thee! Clement to them that are subjected to thee, pious to them that are corrected by thee, and sweet to them that are beloved of thee! O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary!*

CHAPTER XVII

CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE BLESSED IN THE CELESTIAL JERUSALEM

FOR the exercising of ourselves in the contemplation of the Celestial Jerusalem, I will say something, though with much stammering and imperfection. It is a place most high, most beautiful, most spacious, and most firm and stable. The company that is *there* is most noble, most fair,

most kind, most pure, and most permanent—that is to say, that will never cease nor decay. *There* shall we have a Lord most potent, most excellent, most just, and most munificent; a Father most noble, most rich, most provident, and most pitiful; a brother most like unto us, most loving, most wise, and passing good; a Husband most beautiful, singularly high, most sweet, and in love most fervent.

As for that which concerns *us*, there will be clear vision, firm attention, perfect affection, continual jubilation, most profound reverence, most high admiration, most holy exultation and intimate devotion. In our body there will be agility, clarity, subtilty, and impassibility. And from all the aforesaid things there will arise most sufficient satiety, most sober sobriety, most perfect fruition, most chaste delectation, most hearty diffusion, most pleasant embracing, most inward transformation, and most perfect quietation—all pleasantness, all sweetness, all security, and all liberty—because we shall be exempt from all injury, violence, sin, and misery. *And God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of His Saints, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, neither shall there be sorrow any more, which first things are gone* (Apoc. xxi. 4), as truth itself witnesseth in the Apocalypse. Happy are those tears which the hand of the Creator will wipe away! And therefore verity saith by Isaias (lxvi. 12): *Ye shall be carried to the paps, and upon the knees*

they shall speak you fair. As if a mother would speak one fair, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And because we shall rejoice so much for the good of another, as we love him, and we shall truly love all as well as ourselves, and God more perfectly than ourselves — our joy, therefore, will be increased according to the infinite number of Angels, for whose good we will rejoice as for our own. And we will beyond all comparison rejoice more for the immensity of the Divine power, wisdom, and goodness than for our own felicity ; and because the same is excessive, we shall be so absorbed with joy and the Divine felicity, and we shall enter into the joy of our Lord within and without, we shall be absorbed and compassed about on every side with excessive joy. And it is no wonder ; for God doth love us incomparably more than we do ourselves ; and therefore He will without comparison give us more joy and gladness than we have knowledge, or than we ask or can desire. We shall then abound and superabound with joy, because we love and are loved, because *neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him* (1 Cor. ii. 9). And not only the heart of man that lives here on earth, but also of a man that is in heaven—nay, not of any Angel—is able to comprehend the infinite good and joy prepared for us, and into which we shall enter.

Rejoicing, therefore, I will rejoice in our Lord (Isa. lxi. 10), and render unto Him thanks for so great benefits. *My lips shall rejoice when I shall sing unto Him, and my soul which He hath so nobly redeemed* (Ps. lxx. 23). *Praise our Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion* (Ps. cxlvii. 1). *Let the heavens and earth praise Him, the sea, and all that is in them* (Ps. lxviii. 35). Now let us sing *Alleluia in all the streets of this Jerusalem* (Tobias xiii. 22). *Praise our Lord, therefore, O my soul.* Certainly *I will praise my God as long as I live* (Ps. cxlv. 1), and let all creatures praise Him^{me} with me. Amen.

THE END

SELECTIONS FROM
THE
CATALOGUE

OF

R. & T. WASHBOURNE, LTD.

A Garland of Everlasting Flowers.

By Mrs. INNES-BROWNE, Author of 'Three Daughters of the United Kingdom.' Price 3s. 6d.

An Imperial Love Story.

By HENRY CURTIES, Author of 'The Idol of the King.' Price 3s. 6d.

The Secret of Carickferneagh Castle.

An Irish Romance. By S. A. TURK, Authoress of Prize Stories: 'The Ghost of Elton Towers,' 'Lord Eldon's Mistake,' etc. Price 2s.

Short Spiritual Readings for Mary's Children.

By MADAME CECILIA, Religious of St. Andrew's Convent, Streatham, London, S.W. Price 2s. 6d. net.

Selections from the Catalogue of

The Wheat of the Elect.

Eucharistic Verses. By the Rev. JOHN FITZPATRICK, O.M.I., Author of 'Eucharistic Elevations.' Price 1s.

Our Lady's Book of Days.

Compiled by the Hon. ALISON STOURTON. With a Letter of Introduction from the Rev. FATHER FITZPATRICK, O.M.I. Price 1s. 6d.

Virgo Prædicanda.

Verses in Our Lady's Praise. By the Rev. JOHN FITZPATRICK, O.M.I. Price, paper, 6d. ; cloth, 1s.

Cross and Chrysanthemum.

An episode of Japanese History. By the Rev. J. SPILLMANN, S.J. Price 3s. 6d.

The Sacred Heart.

From the German of the Very Rev. J. A. KELLER, D.D. New Edition. Price 2s. 6d.

St. Joseph's Help.

From the German of the Very Rev. J. A. KELLER, D.D. New Edition. Price 2s. 6d.

Portraits.

Stories for Young and Old. By DAVID BEARNE, S.J. Profusely illustrated and handsomely bound. Price 1s. 6d.

Francis Apricot.

By DAVID BEARNE, S.J. Price 2s. 6d.

Catholic Practice at Church and at Home.

Illustrated. Price, paper, 3d. ; cloth, flush, 6d. ; cloth, gilt edges, 1s.

Consoling Thoughts from Father Faber.

Arranged by W. M. HILL. Price 1s. 6d.

Cor Cordium.

Thoughts for the clients of the Sacred Heart. By MADAME CECILIA. Price 1s. 6d. net ; or, on separate cards, as June tickets, 1s. net.

Faith of Our Fathers.

By CARDINAL GIBBONS. Price 1s. net, paper ; cloth, 1s. 6d. net.

Ecce Homo.

Passion Meditations. By Rev. D. G. HUBERT. With Preface by LADY HERBERT. Illustrated. Price 1s. 6d.

Letters on Christian Doctrine.

By the Rev. F. M. DE ZULUETA, S.J. Price 2s. 6d. net.

Selections from the Catalogue of

Maria Sanctissima.

From the German of Dr. KELLER. Price 3s. 6d.

Our Lord in the Eucharist.

Selections from FATHER FABER. Price 1s.

Our Lady and the Eucharist.

Selections from FATHER FABER. Price 1s.

The Page of James the Fifth of Scotland.

Translated from the French. By S. A. C. Price 3s. 6d.

Sequentia Christiana; or, Elements of the Christian Religion.

By C. B. DAWSON, S.J., B.A. Price 3s. 6d. net.

Three Daughters of the United Kingdom.

By Mrs. INNES BROWNE. Price 3s. 6d.

Visits to Jesus and Mary.

By the Rev. C. COX, O.M.I. Price 1s., 2s., 3s., and 4s. 6d.

Threshold of the Catholic Church.

By Dr. BAGSHAWE. Price, paper, 6d. net.; cloth, 1s.

A Manual of Bible History.

With 8 Coloured Maps. By CHARLES HART, B.A., Assistant Master at St. Cuthbert's Grammar School, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Author of 'The Intermediate English Grammar.' Price 3s. 6d. net.

The Maps have been specially printed for this book, and all the names agree in spelling, *for the first time*, with the Douai Version of the Bible. The Maps can also be had separately at 1d. each.

Lectures on the Holy Eucharist.

By CHARLES COUPE, S.J., M.A. Lond., sometime Professor of Philosophy, Stonyhurst College. Edited with notes and references by HATHERLEY MORE. Price 3s. 6d.

Ambassador of Christ.

By CARDINAL GIBBONS. Price 4s. net.

The Holy Bible: its Use and Abuse.

By the Right Rev. Mgr. J. S. CANON VAUGHAN. Price 3s. 6d. net.

Catholic Doctrines Explained and Proved.

By Rev. P. RYAN. Price, 1s. net; cloth, 2s. net.

659027

R. and T. Washbourne, Ltd.

Characteristics from the Writings of Father Faber.

Edited by Rev. J. FITZPATRICK, O.M.I. Price 5s. net.

Corpus Christi.

Selections from FATHER FABER. Price 1s.

Corpus Domini.

Selections from FATHER FABER. Price 1s.

Credentials of the Catholic Church.

By Rev. CANON BAGSHAWE, D.D. Price, paper, 6d.
net ; cloth, 1s.

Creed Explained ; or, an Exposition of the Catholic Doctrine.

By the Rev. A. DEVINE, Pass. Price 5s.

The Duchess of York's Page.

By Mrs. W. MAUDE. Illustrated. Price 2s. 6d.

Forget-me-Nots from Many Gardens ; or, Thirty Days' Devotion to the Holy Souls.

Price 1s. 6d.

LONDON: R. & T. WASHBOURNE, LTD.,
1, 2 & 4 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

BV 4831 .H5513 1907 SMC
Hilton, Walter,
Stimulus divini amoris
47063341

